NEW SERIAL BY GEORGE GRIFFITH STARTS NEXT WEEK.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 348. FOR WEEK ENDING AUGUST 31ST, 1895. [ONE PENNY.

A SIGNAL SUCCESS.

"'Tis not in mortals to command success, but we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."

THE PEARSON POTTERY CO., HANLEY,

Are Selling Fast the Most Wonderful Package of Crockery in the World.

100 PIECES FOR £1 1s.

A beautiful Dinner Service of 50 pieces is guaranteed **Worth the Guinea alone**, consequently a Charming China Tea Service, and a useful Collection of Crockery, are given **FOR NOTHING.**

Thousands sold all over the world. Everybody not only satisfied but amazed at the quantity and quality given.

The Secret of the Success.—THE PEARSON POTTERY COMPANY are manufacturers, no middlemen, like many other advertisers. The PEARSON POTTERIES have nearly 2,000 feet frontage to the town of Hanley.

Hundreds of these packages are applied for as **Wedding or Birthday Presents.** And what more useful present can be given? Every item is useful.

The Thirty Shilling Bazaar Parcel is selling well.

APPLY AT ONCE.

Send a Post Card for Particulars. You will never regret it. Free from breakage guaranteed. All letters to the

PEARSON POTTERY COMPANY, HANLEY.

MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS

For the Immediate Production of

BOTANIC BEER.

A Nine-gallon Cask of Alcoholic Beer from a Brewery will cost you 10/6, but Eight Gallons of Beer made from

Mason's EXTRACT of HERBS

Can be obtained for 6d., plus a pound or two of Sugar and a little Yeast.

THE FINEST BEVERAGE IN THE WORLD.

Inventors and Manufacturers:

Newball & Mason,

HYSON GREEN WORKS,

Nottingham.

If unable to obtain it in your neighbourhood, send 9 stamps for sample bottle; or samples of both Wine Essence and Extract of Herbs, post free for 15 stamps.

DEVONSHIRE CREAM.

(REALLY GENUINE.)

In Patent Air-tight Tins, ½lb., **1s. 2d.**; 1lb., **2s.**; 2lbs., **3s. 9d.**, including Tin and Postage.

MRS. CONYERS, KIRKHAMPTON, SHALTON, N. DEVON.

Digitized by Google

St. Jacobs Oil

ESTABLISHED FIFTY YEARS.

CURES...

Rheumatism.
SPRAINS. STRAINS.
BRUISES. SORENESS.
STIFFNESS.
SORE THROAT.
CHEST COLDS.
NEURALGIA. LUMBAGO
BACKACHE.
HEADACHE.
FEETACHE.
And all Bodily Aches and Pains.

AFFLICTED TWENTY YEARS.

MR. WILLIAM DEAN, of 6, Barleyfield Row, Walsall, says:—"I have been afflicted with Rheumatism almost continually for twenty years. For twelve months I was unable to work; I tried different hospitals, many doctors, and several kinds of medicine, all to no use; was unable to get rest night or day until I used ST JACOBS OIL. As the result of using this marvellous Oil I can now sleep well, and go to my work regularly every day free from pain, perfectly cured."

The Great Pain-killing Remedy.
There is nothing so good. Acts Like Magic.

Price 1/1½ and 2/6.

The CHARLES A. VOGELER CO.,
45, Farringdon Road, LONDON,
Sole Proprietors and Manufacturers.

Conquers Pain.

BLACKHEADS. I guarantee to cure the most stubborn cases when all else has failed. Book of particulars for an inexpensive, harmless, permanent, and certain home cure, post free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Mrs. V. EVANS, 18, Union Passage, Birmingham.

TOOTH-ACHE
CURED INSTANTLY BY
BUNTER'S NERVINE
Prevents Decay.
Saves Extraction.
Sleepless Nights Prevented.
Neuralgic Headache and all Nerve Pains Removed by BUNTER'S NERVINE. All Chemists, 1s. 1½d.

A BOON TO LADIES.

Collins' Marvellous Female Remedy.

Mr. COLLINS [who was 30 years a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England] will forward, free of Charge, full PARTICULARS of a REMEDY, which during an extensive practice both at home and in the Colonies he has never known to fail in the most OBSTINATE CASES of OBSTRUCTION and IRREGULARITIES. Send addressed envelope for full particulars, and waste no more time and money on useless Pills and so-called Remedies, etc., which, in the majority of cases, are nothing but PURGATIVES, and cause SICKNESS, PROSTRATION, and PAIN, without having the desired effect.

Letters to be addressed—
D. COLLINS,
GOTHIC HOUSE, 9, ERSKINE STREET, LIVERPOOL.

HAIR DESTROYED.
A lady who has permanently destroyed Superfluous Hairs on herself, will be happy to forward free, to all similarly afflicted, full particulars of a simple, inexpensive and harmless self-treatment. Send stamped addressed envelope in confidence to Mrs. "T. D.," 87, Strand, London.

TO TOBACCONISTS COMMENCING.
£20 See Illus. Guide and Catalogue (259 pages), 3d. "How to Open a Cigar Stores, £20 to £2,000." TOBACCONISTS' OUTFITTING CO., 186, Euston Road, London. (Over 50 years' reputation.) Manager, H. MYERS.

MADAME FRAIN'S
FAMOUS
FEMALE MIXTURE.
The most powerful and effective on earth.

For the most obstinate cases. Will not injure the most delicate. Price 7s. 6d. (Strongest, 11s. per bottle); post free, 6d. extra. HERBAL INSTITUTE, 1a, Hackney Road (opposite Shoreditch Church), London, N.E. Send at once stamped directed envelope for particulars and proofs. I will forfeit £100 for every testimonial that is not genuine, and they can be seen at any time.
Sold also by all Chemists.

New Harrison. SWIFT GOLD MEDAL.
KNITTER

KNITS STOCKINGS (Ribbed or plain) GLOVES and CLOTHING in WOOL, SILK, or COTTON. INSTRUCTIONS FREE. Lists free per post. 25 Triumphant Awards, including 7 Gold Medals for the "HARRISON" and "SUN" Machines.
HARRISON KNITTING MACHINE CO., Ltd., Works: 48, Upper Brook St., Manchester.

BLUSHING.
A lady, whose daughter was cured of this in less than a month, will be happy to send particulars to anyone inclosing stamped addressed envelope to Mrs. WILLIAMS, No. 1, County Chambers B., Martineau St., Birmingham.

BLUSHING
permanently cured. A pamphlet giving sound practical advice, and full particulars of a successful treatment for a rapid, simple, and inexpensive home-cure, forwarded free to all upon receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Prof. F. W. HOLT, (Rooms O), Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London

ONE BOX
OF
DR. MACKENZIE'S IMPROVED HARMLESS ARSENIC WAFERS
will produce the most lovely complexion that the imagination could desire. Clear, Fresh, freed from Blotch, Blemish, Coarseness, Redness, Freckles, or Pimples. Sent post free, 4s. 6d.
To whiten the hands and skin, use
Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Toilet Soap.
1s. per tablet, 3 for 2s. 6d. Postage, 3d.
S. HARVEY,
Balham Hill, London, S.W.
Beware of injurious imitations.

HAIR DESTROYED permanently and absolutely by an entirely new and harmless self-treatment, total destruction guaranteed. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope. Prof. F. T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

HAIR DESTROYED.
Absolutely, permanently, painlessly (without extraction, or burning, or cutting off), and without injury to the skin, **or no charge made.** Inquiries confidentially solicited. Particulars and testimonials from hospital nurses and others, free. Address Mrs. E. GOULD, 129, New Kent Road, London, S.E.

RED NOSES
caused by Indigestion, etc. All who suffer from this distressing and disfiguring complaint should write to Dr. HOWELL, 22, Glasshouse Street, W., who guarantees a Cure in a few days. 2/6 per box.

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

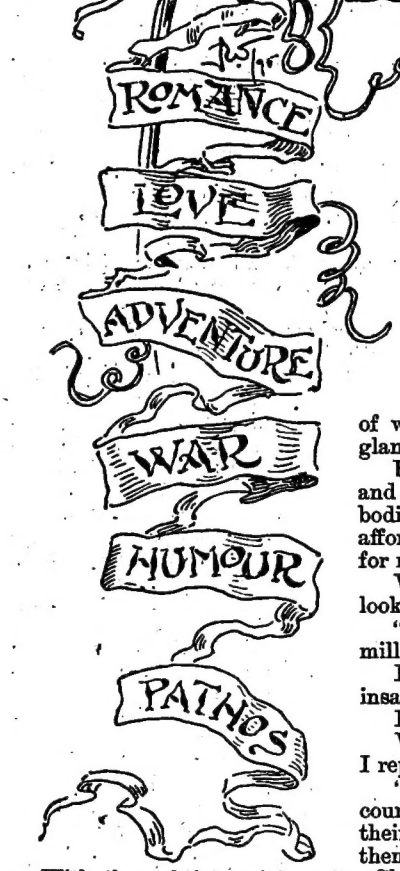
SHORT STORIES

No. 348.] [One Penny.

Edited by

C. Arthur Pearson.

For the Week ending August 31st, 1895.



JENS.

THERE had been trouble at the mill that day, and, as usual, I had lost my temper. The men had scowled and muttered among themselves as my harsh words descended on their heads, and many threatening glances had been directed towards me as I was perched upon a pile of lumber, bidding them defiance. The upshot of the quarrel was that I closed the mill for the day, and told them that all who were satisfied to work on the old terms could return to their posts in the morning.

Towards night, however, an uneasy feeling took possession of me. I could not rest. The atmosphere in and about the office seemed stifling and oppressive. I left the mill and went home. On my way I saw groups of workmen gathered at the street corners, all looking at me with menacing glances.

But what did I care for their looks? Were they not dependent upon me and my mill for the bread to satisfy their hunger, and for the rags to cover their bodies? Yes! What did it matter to me whether they worked or not? I could afford to close the mill for years—for ever, if I chose—and still have enough for my every want. I laughed in their faces as I passed, and called them fools.

When I reached home my sister met me at the door. There was an anxious look in her eyes and a tremour in her voice as she greeted me.

"Oh, Edward! is it true that you have had trouble again with the men at the mill?" she asked.

I scanned her face closely before I answered. Yes, our hereditary curse—insanity—shone in her eyes now. It had come upon us at last.

I could hardly repress the cry of pain that sprang to my lips at the discovery.

With an effort, however, I calmed myself and kissed her as usual. Then I replied to her question:

"Yes, sister mine. The dogs had the audacity to ask for shorter hours. Of course, I refused them and closed the mill. They can do their loafing now at their own expense, and it will not be long before their empty stomachs will bring them to their senses."

With the subtlety of insanity Clare tried to reason with me that evening. She took the men's part, and pleaded for them so piteously that at last, just to please and quiet her, I consented to accede to some of their unreasonable demands.

At this she came and kissed me, and after a few minutes' conversation on other subjects she left me and retired for the night.

When alone, however, the pent-up feelings that had been tormenting me the whole evening broke loose from all restraint. I vowed then to take a terrible revenge upon the dolts who, by their demands at the mill that day, had so excited Clare, bringing on the crisis that unbalanced her mind.

For years I had been constantly on the watch for the first symptoms of insanity which I knew would come

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

sooner or later to my sister or me. The disease was hereditary, and I had always known that one or both of us would become its victim in the end. Oh! how I had prayed, often and often, that it would fall to my lot, and leave my beautiful Clare unscathed; my prayers had been in vain. That night I saw that the fire was kindled and burning which would finally destroy her reason, and leave her a mental wreck.

Clare and I were all in all to each other. Our parents having died when we were children, we were alone in the world. We both knew what was in store for one of us at least some day, but by an unspoken agreement we had never mentioned the subject between us. I am sure, however, that the same thought governed Clare's actions that ruled mine, and that she feared the excitement resultant from the quarrel at the mill would bring on the beginning of the end, never dreaming that the very fear she entertained had effected in her what she dreaded should happen to me.

There was one man especially whom I had marked for punishment—a fellow who had said nothing, but who, I felt satisfied, was at the bottom of the trouble, for he was well fitted by his superior knowledge and attainments to be a leader of the rabble that had threatened me. Adam Morley should suffer for the part he had taken. He did not deceive me by standing apart from the rest, looking on disinterestedly. His acting was too transparent to deceive me—so overdone that it betrayed him and his little scheme.

Yes; the more I thought the matter over the more convinced I become that Morley was the instigator of the trouble, and that he was the man on whom to take revenge. When I had made this perfectly clear to myself I took a knife, a murderous-looking weapon I had picked up one day at the mill, and put it in my pocket. Then drawing my hat well down over my face, I stole noiselessly out of the house.

I knew from former experiences that the mill hands were yet out in the streets, congregated at the corners, and in the bar-rooms, as usual, when they had a day to themselves.

My judgment of their habits and character was true and correct, for I found them just where I had expected.

The men were gathered in small groups here and there, orderly enough to look at, but I knew from their actions and from the subdued tones in which they were talking that they were planning some new devilry for the next day. I walked along leisurely, although every feeling within me prompted me to rush forward, weapon in hand, and scatter death and destruction among them.

I was just passing a dark doorway when someone reached out and grasped me by the arm, drawing me inside.

"Mr. Zavalla, please do not go away further," a man's voice said, in low tones. "The men have been drinking all day, and are just in the humour to do you some harm if you go among them."

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Adam Morley."

The very man I had come out to find! and here I had found him, or, rather, he had found me. I felt like shouting in exultation at my success. Here we two were standing face to face in the dark, I grasping the knife in my hand ready to strike, and he unsuspecting and defenceless.

Just then someone laid a hand upon my shoulder, and a voice, gentle, but clear and distinct, spoke in my ear:

"Easy, easy, my friend. That would be murder."

At the sound of the voice and the touch of the hand a strange thrill went through me. My arm dropped to my side, and the tumult in my breast seemed to die. A new feeling came over me, a sense of peace and quiet and rest.

"Come, Mr. Zavalla," the speaker continued, "this is no place for you at this time of night. I am going your way, and will keep you company until we reach your house."

The man took my arm. I felt perfectly contented to go with him. When we reached the street, and the light from a gas lamp fell upon him, I looked into his face. He was a perfect stranger to me.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Zavalla," he said, with a smile. "I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Jens. I knew your father intimately at one time, and I hope I may be allowed to call his son also by the name of friend."

"Certainly you may, Mr. Jens," I replied, cordially, feeling drawn to this strange man in an unaccountable manner altogether new to me, for it had always been one of my great difficulties to become on friendly terms with anybody.

I am fully six feet in height, so that, by my side, Jens was a comparatively small man, his head barely reaching up to my shoulder. He was slender in build, with remarkably small hands and feet, and his movements were quick, but sure and exact, free from that nervous flutter which often attends the swift motions of small men.

But the special charm in Jens was his eyes. In darkness or light I seemed to feel them looking at me from the first moment we met. His voice, too, had a peculiar power over my feelings. Whenever its sound reached my ears, no matter how excited I had been just before, a restful feeling would steal over me, and I became cool and collected.

That night Jens somehow gained a mastery over me from which I fear death alone can emancipate me. When we reached my house he followed me inside, at my invitation, of course; but it had been wrung from me by one of his glances and the soft purring murmur of his voice.

I can never tell why I did so, but I confided to Jens all my troubles. We slept in the same room; I in my own bed, he on the sofa—that being his choice. The day was just breaking when I awoke. I lay for a few moments thinking over what had happened the night before, and I felt heartily ashamed of myself for the foolish part I had acted in taking a perfect stranger into my confidence, and giving him a lodging under my roof.

As I pondered, I became convinced that Jens, the pretended friend of my father, was an impostor and a fraud. When I had fully come to this conclusion, it needed only a moment to form the determination that he must leave my house.

With this intention I got up and approached the sofa on which he was lying, apparently sound asleep. When I drew near, however, he turned his face towards me, looking up with his wonderful eyes, and smiling brightly.

"You are an early riser, my friend," he said. "I am inclined that way myself, but not knowing your habits I did not like to disturb you."

I assured him that he would have to get up before the first faint peep of dawn if he expected to find me asleep.

My determination to eject him from my house that morning failed as miserably as it failed every morning after. The look in his eyes, the sound of his voice, his smile of calm assurance disarmed me, and I was helpless.

He became an inmate of my house; he ate my bread, and ruled me by a word or a glance. When he was

Digitized by Google

absent, or I was out of his sight, I hated him, and regretted the day on which I had fallen into his power. Even my beautiful Clare came under his influence.

Jens followed me about wherever I went. In the street, at the office, or in the mills, he was at my heels.

The change in my sister from day to day was fully apparent to my watchful eyes. Often I saw her stealing away from my door on tiptoe, after standing there watching me closely for several minutes. At such times I never looked up from my work, but let her follow out her strange whims without showing her that she had been detected.

One day she had not come to my door as usual for over an hour, and I became uneasy. I went to her room, but she was not there. Then I visited the sitting-room and the library, but found her in neither place. Next I went into the garden. I was stealing along the walk leading to her favourite arbour as noiselessly as possible, so as not to startle her, should I find her there, when the sound of subdued voices reached my ears.

I paused a moment, and crouching down where I stood I peered through the shrubbery. What I saw there I shall never forget as long as life is in me.

Jens held my poor demented sister in his embrace, kissing her again and again, while the blushes came and went on her beautiful face. She was so completely in his power that she did not even struggle to become free or murmur a protest against his outrage. Her bright eyes gleamed with a light I had never seen in them before—half fear, half ecstasy—as she gazed mutely into his.

A resistless longing came over me to grasp the unprincipled scoundrel by the throat. My hands fairly clawed the air, as with a cry of rage upon my lips I dashed through the bushes and rushed towards him.

The cry betrayed me, and his life was saved. The next thing I remember, Jens was bending over me as I lay prostrate upon the ground, his mysterious eyes looking straight into mine, while what seemed to me a taunting smile hovered round the corners of his mouth.

"Come, Edward," he said, "let me assist you to your feet." The tone was more authoritative than any he had ever used to me before.

I did not resist him. I submitted meekly to his command. But in that moment I vowed to take his life at the first opportunity that offered.

From that day I calmly bided my time. Instead of Jens keeping at my heels as heretofore, it was I who never let him out of my sight.

I gave him no opportunity to be alone with my sister, and I could see that it annoyed him. One day, however, when I had been rather more persistent than usual in following him about, he said to me in Clare's presence, as he took her hand in his:

"Edward, I love your sister, and she has promised to become my wife. Have you any objection to our engagement?"

Cruel knave! He had chosen his time and place with keen foresight. With Clare's eyes looking into mine imploringly, and her hands clinging to him trustfully, what answer could I give?

He had wrung consent from me; but that should not save him from the fate I had in store for him. Carefully, imperceptibly, I was weaving a web round him, which would be his doom sooner or later.

One night the opportunity came. The mill was running night and day, through a pressure of work. I resumed my place while the rush lasted, and had chosen the night watch; for that, I knew, would afford me the best chance to get rid of my enemy.

I had the plan perfected to a nicety. There was a long, inclined plane inside the mill into which the slabs and refuse were thrown. At the bottom of this plane was an endless chain that carried the stuff up a sort of lift to the height of over one hundred feet and fully five hundred yards from the mill; thence it was shot down from its elevation into the slab pit below, where a fire was burning constantly, fed by an almost continuous stream of slabs and timber ends.

It was midnight. The mill had been stopped for half an hour while the hands were eating their meal. I had made the rounds of the mill during this time, and had inspected everything. Jens followed me. We had returned to the saw-room and stopped at the edge of the plane.

I carried a hammer in my hand which I had always used during my tour of inspection. As we stopped at the plane I turned suddenly, pointing into space behind us, without saying a word. Jens was thrown off his guard, and looked round.

His back was towards me for a moment. With all my strength I struck him over the head with the hammer, and at the same time, with a push, sent him spinning to the bottom of the plane.

Then I ran to the engineer's station. I pulled the lever, throwing the throttle wide open. The machinery started with such suddenness that belts and pulleys creaked, and the large circular saws hummed and clanged like a thousand bells.

I never stopped to see what happened inside the mill. I ran outside, and thence to a high bank on the river, where I could have a full view of the smoking, burning pit below.

Slab after slab came tumbling over, and shot downwards into the burning mass, but I was looking to see the body of my hated enemy. I saw him at last, but he was standing upright, moving slowly, his form clearly outlined against the starry sky.

Just then there came a terrible roar and hiss. The earth shook and trembled under my feet, and a shower of iron and bricks, of timbers and splinters of wood, fell about me on every side.

I looked round me. The mill was one great blaze of fire. A huge pillar of smoke ascended on the calm night air, bearing the souls of the dead and the groans of the wounded and dying with it towards Heaven.

* * * * *

They say I am mad. They say I am a murderer. Perhaps I am both; perhaps I am neither. They do not hang mad men; however, at least not as long as they have sense enough to behave themselves as such.

* * * * *

I was almost thrown off my guard to-day. Clare visited me—she is as mad as a March hare now—looking as beautiful as ever. Jens was with her. He had a deep, broad scar across his face, and walked with a limp, so that I did not recognise him at first.

But when I saw his eyes I knew him instantly. They stayed with me most of the afternoon. When they were going away, Jens for a moment took his eyes off me. I was about to spring upon him and grasp him by the throat when he turned round again suddenly with the old smile upon his face.

"Remember, Edward, that you must behave like a gentleman, or people will think you are deceiving them," he said.

There must be something in that advice. I will dissect and analyse it by the time poor Clare and that rascally husband of hers visit me again. W. H. H.

Digitized by Google

IT CAME TO PASS

BY WINIFRED GRAHAM

CHAPTER VI.

The two latest comers in the Hotel Mirabeau, St. Moritz, were Mrs. Peel and her invalid step-son.

All sorts and conditions of men had assembled in the large dining-hall, and Charlotte surveyed them curiously, as she took her seat beside Hugh.

Charlotte tried to smile at the frail boy under her care

The Hotel Mirabeau, St. Moritz.

and engage him in conversation, but her lips quivered involuntarily. She had taken the law into her own hands—unfolded the history of his birth, and enforced the journey to save his endangered life. Yet even now he could hardly realise she was not some mysterious visitant from another world. She had donned a loose white gown for comfort, and fastened a soft frill of chiffon round her throat.

"What a different atmosphere to smoky London!" said Hugh, at last. "I feel fresh life coursing through my veins already."

"You will soon get strong and well again," she replied, "with complete freedom from worry. I cannot bear to think of your late slavery while that wicked Mrs. Donnington-Bain lived on the fat of the land, and wasted your substance. Did you never love her, Hugh?"

"How could I love such a woman! She is just as hard as a stone. I cannot remember her ever kissing me as a child, or saying a kind word. I grew up unloved, unblessed. But for my musical passion I should have starved for lack of sympathy. During those years I simply lived on the hope of some day appearing before an audience, and when at last the great time came I nearly died of excitement. Every nerve in my body tingled and vibrated through the instrument. I forgot that many millions daily indulged the same flights—men and women whose genius made fame easy and success assured. But this was fortunate, since a sense of inferiority has hindered hundreds from nurturing talent."

"Yes; they aspire to perfection and faint by the way."

Hugh agreed. He had experienced that faintness in the great city of London.

"I met such a sad-looking woman on the staircase," he said, "but she is not among the diners. She seemed almost too weak to walk, and every few steps clung to the banisters, panting. She stared at me blankly, and her lips parted in a half-smothered exclamation. I thought she was going to speak, but she passed on wearily. I glanced back at the foot of the stairs and saw her standing above gazing down with wide wondering eyes. Probably some mutual attraction caused us to turn simultaneously, and yet I fancied she had been watching me longer."

"I dare say we shall find endless opportunities for character-study here. You must point her out to me."

After dinner Hugh saw the stranger again.

"There she is," he whispered, "on that lounge in the window."

"How lonely she looks, poor creature, and what a strangely pathetic expression!"

Her smooth grey hair waved back softly from her forehead, lined with suffering. She was the broken down wreck of a once handsome woman. Occasionally her eyes flashed in the light; they had been bright and piercing in their day. The faded complexion turned a shade greyer as she caught sight of Hugh, while vague anxiety fretted her brow. Charlotte drew nearer.

"I am afraid I stared at your young companion," the pale lady said, addressing her in low hurried tones. "His face startled me. He looks very ill!"

"Yes, I have brought him here for his health."

"That word embraces so much, sometimes merely excusing bad temper, often forestalling death."

Charlotte shivered.

"I beg your pardon," said the stranger. "I had no intention of paining you. It seems such a little thing to me, for I am very ill myself—incurable. I was tired of lying in bed, and got up to-night for an hour. I was racked with a horrible, throbbing pain, and had no one to speak to. I am here quite alone. I heard your young friend coughing on the stairs; it reminded me of a cough I once had myself, and I thought of my mixture. It is very strong and effectual, an American prescription—Jamaica ginger, rum, and honey, etc. I should be very glad if he would try it."

"Thanks," said Charlotte; "it is very good of you."

"He is such a pretty boy," said the stranger, "though he might not appreciate the name."

"He is nineteen years of age."

"Nineteen—only nineteen!"

"He is very musical," Charlotte vouchsafed, glad to

Digitized by Google

distract her own mind by conversation. "Are you fond of the violin?"

"It is my favourite instrument," the lady replied. "I should have taken it up, but painting was more my *forte* as a girl."

"Why 'as a girl'? Surely you have not dropped it?"

"Yes, unfortunately. I haven't touched a brush for nearly twenty years."

"What a pity to neglect your art!"

"My life has been a dreary one—you could not understand how dreary. Perhaps some day you will persuade your young friend to play for me. I should like to hear some music again before I die."

"He is my stepson, and would do anything I asked him. He fancied you seemed ill on the staircase."

"Yes. It was that pain over my heart. He looked as though he wanted to help me, yet hardly dared. Sympathy goes far to alleviate suffering."

Charlotte felt a deep compassion for her, and signed to Hugh to join them.

"I have not yet learned your name," she said, "so I cannot introduce you."

"Mrs. Leigh," was the quick retort; "and yours?"

"Peel—Charlotte Peel."

"Now I seem to know you better," declared Mrs. Leigh, glancing swiftly at Charlotte as she spoke. "I wish I could sit up longer, it is such a pleasure to talk; but I am obliged to retire early. My nights are simply interminable. I try to read, but the few books I have are very dry. A lady here lent me an amusing story which I scanned while in great pain. It actually made me laugh, though a moment later I flung it on the floor, damaging the flimsy paper cover. She has not offered me another since. Your room is No. 150, Mrs. Peel?"

"Yes. How did you know?"

"Mine is 149, and I saw your luggage taken in. I hope that my being an invalid will not disturb you, as I sometimes cry out loudly in my sleep. I am very nervous, and dream terribly."

She rose with an effort, and held out a blue-veined hand.

"Good-night, Mrs. Peel," she said, a slight quiver in her voice. "I hope you will rest well."

Then she glided from the room like a grey-gowned ghost, closing the door noiselessly behind her.

"What a queer-looking woman," said Charlotte, "and yet she fascinates me. Fancy, Hugh! she says she is dying."

"And possibly already in touch with the other world," he suggested.

"How strange that she should be here alone in such a condition! She must have some friends or relatives."

"Apparently not."

"Poor creature! It makes me feel uncomfortable to think of her."

"You are tired and worried, Mrs. Peel. May I write and acquaint your husband with our movements while you rest? I think you ought to tell him."

"Perhaps; but I will write myself. Heaven knows I do not want to bear malice; but he was so hard, so cruel, and time alone will soften him. I took the only course open to me, and you have no cause for self-reproach. It is best as it is."

"Dear Mrs. Peel, when I think of all the trouble I have brought upon you I wish I had never been born. And what a birth! It is too horrible to think of!"

"Then don't dwell upon it. Live in the present, and try to forget the past. By the way, remember that your name is 'Peel' now, and 'Derringer' no longer."

"Except to the public," he said, with a smile. "I shall hardly know myself as 'Peel.' But you are overcome with fatigue, and I must not keep you talking."

"Before I leave you, promise not to write to Raymond."

"Is it likely I should neglect your wishes after all your goodness? I shall never be able to repay you."

"Then if you wish to please me, say nothing about it," she replied fondly, but though she smiled there was a tremour in her voice.

"Sleep well!" he whispered, pressing her hand.

"God bless you."

Charlotte wished him good-night hastily, and turned away to hide her tears.

"Sleep well!" she thought. "Oh! the irony of the words! Could there be any sleep for me with this weight of sorrow on my heart?"

She went silently upstairs, and flinging open her window, gazed out at the black darkness.

"Oh! Raymond! Raymond!" she moaned, forcing back her tears. "I want you so badly. Everything is empty without you. Why—why wouldn't you be kind to me and to your son? Isn't his neglected life a slur on your manhood, and are you not sorry to-night for your forlorn little wife bearing your burden alone?"

She felt he must hear her, as she stretched out her arms to the skies, with a gesture of despair. Then her head sank upon the window-sill, and two or three low sobs shook her frame.

Poor Charlotte Peel! The world seemed very desolate, as a prayer rose from the depths of her heavily-laden spirit.

"Help me, oh, Lord, and soften Raymond's heart! Bring him to me again, for Thy mercy's sake. Bring back the dear departed days of love and happiness."

Her door opened softly, and she started up, half-expecting that her prayer was answered.

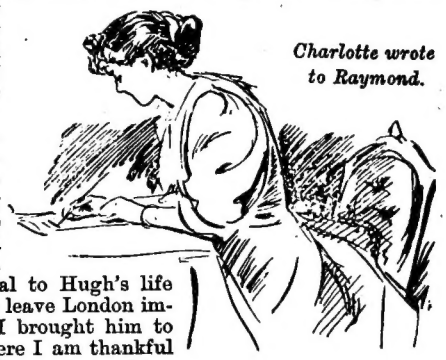
Before her stood a gaunt figure robed in white, with short grey hair falling over her neck, and strange gleaming eyes which sought Charlotte's astonished gaze.

"Mrs. Leigh!" she exclaimed, dashing away her tears.

"Don't be frightened," replied the figure, extending a long thin arm. "I have only brought the cough mixture."

CHAPTER VII.

The following morning Charlotte wrote to Raymond, little guessing in what a fever of suspense he had passed the last few days, or how welcome would be the sight of the familiar hand.



Charlotte wrote to Raymond.

"I am sending our address," she began, "hoping you may have reconsidered your decision. It was essential to Hugh's life that he should leave London immediately, so I brought him to St. Moritz, where I am thankful to say the climate is working wonders. Oh! Raymond, need I tell you how deeply I feel this separation? Never think, dear, that I came away from any lack of affection, for my love is, if possible, strengthened rather than shaken by this great sorrow. I am ready to forget everything if you will come to me and own your son. Why should we cringe to the opinion of the world? So long as I have *you*, my husband, I want nothing more, so let us brave it out together. If you could look into my heart, I know you would come. Every hour the blank in my life grows darker and more dreary, till I fancy the task I have set myself is too hard. I want you Raymond—I want you." Having folded the note with trembling fingers, Charlotte put away her writing materials—a calm, cold look of self-possession on her pale face. She tried not to realise how much depended on his answer, though her heart was like lead, and her body felt chilled and numb. Then remembering the

Digitized by Google

sufferer upstairs, Charlotte sent to inquire for Mrs. Leigh, who proved worse and desired to see her. With ready promptitude she obeyed the summons, her sympathetic heart aching for the lonely woman.

"Forgive me, Mrs. Peel," murmured the invalid feebly, "for troubling you to come. But the doctor is sending a nurse this morning, as I am decidedly weaker, and I fear I may not like her." She stretched out her hand pathetically. "Dear friend, you are so different to an ordinary stranger that I ventured to hope you would stay with me a little. Is it too much to ask?"

Charlotte sat down by the white curtained bed, and took Mrs. Leigh's thin fingers in her own. "No, I am only too glad," she replied, "for I feel very lonely here."

A look of surprise came into Mrs. Leigh's drawn face. Involuntarily she shook her head. "You will never be friendless and deserted as I am," she declared, speaking with a certain grave assurance.

Charlotte shivered as she watched the bright sunshine creep across the room and fall upon the sick bed.

"No, I ought not to complain," she said, "for I am *hoping*" (laying a stress on the word) "that my husband will join us shortly, and in the meanwhile his son is with me. But surely you have some relations or friends, Mrs. Leigh, who would come to you?"

"Not one."

It was a pitiful admission, and brought a flush to the ghastly cheeks. For a moment her voice faltered; then she continued in ordinary tones: "It must seem very strange to you that I am left to die alone, but I suppose I have escaped love. It is the painful consequence of a wasted existence."

"You may have done good without knowing it," murmured Charlotte soothingly, "for few lives are utterly useless. Example alone goes a long way."

"Unfortunately it is not so with me, and I have only myself to blame for a loveless old age. I have a history, Mrs. Peel, a miserably sad story, of which I never speak. Are you content to befriend a dying woman who has sinned in the past, since death"—with a faint smile—"must shortly divide us?"

Charlotte felt the speaker's burning hand tighten on her arm, and pity for the sinking life welled into her eyes. She had grown fond of her in a single night, and determined, whatever her history, to cheer these last days of pain.

"You could never guess what I have endured," continued Mrs. Leigh, in answer to a sympathetic word from her listener. "I have suffered so long and so deeply that I cannot weep or cry or wring my hands, or go through any of the pantomime of grief. Three days ago the tears came to my eyes for the first time during the last ten years. A little girl in the gardens put her arms round my neck and kissed me. Perpetual sorrow has a hardening effect, which only a child can soften."

"Then you are very fond of children?"

A sudden light came into her eyes.

"Oh! yes. They are so perfectly unconscious of disgrace or sin. But tell me, Mrs. Peel, have you a good husband?"

She asked the question abruptly. For a moment it remained unanswered.

"What do you call good?"

"Does he love as he should? Is he kind and considerate?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Charlotte, without hesitation. "We have had but one dispute since our marriage, and his very faults are ten times dearer to me than another's virtues."

"Happy woman. How few wives could say the same."

"Your husband is dead, I believe?"

There was silence in the room, and Charlottte, turning to Mrs. Leigh, saw her lying back among the pillows, with her face in the shadow. Her eyes were closed, she was feigning sleep. Presently she stirred uneasily, and reopened them.

"How foolishly weak I am—like a fly in late autumn," she declared, forcing a strained smile. "The poor doomed creatures crawl about waiting for the end."

Charlotte tactfully refrained from returning to the subject, though Mrs. Leigh's unknown sorrow was ever present

A little girl in the gardens.

to her mind. She pictured a life, without hope, without joy, without even tears, and the vision appalled her!

The door opened, and a bright-faced nurse entered.

Mrs. Leigh raised herself, eyeing the new-comer critically.

"You are just like a doll I once dressed for a bazaar," she said, "with white strings to its bonnet, and a nurse's frock. That was in my early married life. Everything happened twenty years ago!"

With a farewell word, Mrs. Peel glided from the room.

"That poor woman was quite light-headed this morning, she will not live many days," Charlotte told Hugh.

"Come out and forget that all the world's a hospital," he replied. "Do you know I am so relieved to think you have written to your husband? I could not rest until he knew our whereabouts."

"What will he answer?" Charlotte wondered, painfully conscious of the weight upon her heart.

"Who is that fair-haired girl in the window?" asked Hugh. "What a sweet face—just like a little wax doll!"

"Mrs. Leigh said the same. She is the nurse in 149."

CHAPTER VIII.

Nurse Evelyn supplied Mrs. Peel with details of her patient's case.

"You have come to be near her, I suppose?" she said one morning, pausing on the landing for a moment's conversation.

"Oh! no," replied Charlotte. "I only met her here by chance, and was struck by her forlorn condition."

The nurse raised her eyebrows.

Digitized by Google

"Really! Yet she speaks of you constantly, even in her sleep. She has also told me about your stepson."

"Indeed!" said Charlotte. "She felt interested in him, poor fellow, for he is consumptive, you know."

Yes; Nurse Evelyn knew. She heard his cough on the staircase as she crept noiselessly back to the sick chamber, with flowers from Charlotte in her hand.

"I am better this morning, nurse," murmured Mrs. Leigh. "Won't you sit by my bed and talk? My life has been very silent, and I love a cheerful voice. Have you seen young Mr. Peel to-day?—the boy with the face of an angel."

"I noticed a gentleman in the garden with Mrs. Peel. He glanced up at the window, and certainly his profile was singularly striking—more like a girl's than a man's."

"Good people deserve to be beautiful," she replied gloomily. "I lost my looks twenty years ago, and ever since then life has been one long spell of atonement."

"You must not dwell upon sad subjects," said Nurse Evelyn, kindly but firmly.

"I like them—they are in keeping with my mood. Won't you tell me of your experiences at the hospital in England?"

Nurse Evelyn's face brightened, for she loved to talk of her calling.

"Children were my chief charge there," she began, folding her hands across her knees, "such dear little creatures! I remember my mother visiting me once, and going the round of the cots. A curly haired boy who was up and running about pointed to a small patient lying very ill, and said:

"'Tommy went to the theatre yesterday, ma'am.'

"'How nice for Tommy!' replied my mother, smiling at the sick child, whose convalescent companion appeared vastly amused.

"'It ain't that sort of theatre,' he continued cheerfully. 'I means the place downstairs, where they puts yer to sleep whether you will or no, and cuts 'yer up!' I never liked carrying the children to the operating room, they clung round my neck and cried."

"I adore children!" said Mrs. Leigh.

"Have you none of your own?" asked nurse Evelyn.

The sick woman quailed at the question, her face blanched, as she leant back panting.

"This pain across my heart is killing me!" she moaned.

It was the remembrance of a secret sorrow that drove her to the verge of delirium as she closed her eyes and dropped into a heavy stupor, murmuring, half inarticulately:

"Ask me no questions—*no* questions!" she cried. "Why will they worry me? Your husband is dead, I believe? Have you no children? Oh, those questions—those questions!"

Nurse Evelyn's professional ears caught the gist of her patient's ramblings.

"Nurse," she cried at last. "Nurse, have I incriminated myself?"

"No," came the soft reply, and a cool hand was laid on her burning forehead, as with faltering footsteps, as it were, Mrs. Leigh returned to the realisation of the present.

* * * * *

Raymond was worn out with sleepless nights and fruitless searching; his deserted house seemed like an empty tomb. He fancied Charlotte's presence lurked in every corner, and occasionally started up, imagining he heard her voice, or saw her standing before him with outstretched arms. Every post he watched eagerly; even when out his servants had directions to follow him with letters, that not a moment might be lost should Charlotte proffer an olive branch.

James the butler was in a high state of indignation at Mrs. Peel's conduct, enlarging daily in the servant's hall upon "Master's hevident hanxiety."

"What about dinner to-night, James?" asked the footman, in unusually subdued tones.

"Master went out to that church opposite," replied James stolidly. "I watched him across the road" (with an ominous shake of his head). "All these years as I've been in his service I never knew him to do that of a week day. It's a bad sign, depend upon it, a very bad sign. Missus used to like them Wednesday evening services, and I suppose 'e remembered it to-night."

Saw her standing before him.

"It's my opinion she's committed suicide," declared Parker, the younger man. "Women are that fanciful, especially when they're married; they gets queer ideas and rum notions. Look at cook! She drove her husband to his grave in three months."

Parker had a poor opinion of the weaker sex, having read of meddlesome females who lecture on man's delinquencies, and considered cook the latest form of an emancipated woman. James, on the other hand, admired the victim of Parker's disparaging remarks, and grew hot at the sneer.

"Mrs. Blundelberry is a thoroughly domesticated and highly educated pusson!" he declared emphatically, "and if it wasn't that we were both so well placed in present circumstances, I would make her Mrs. James Jellicoe to-morrow!"

Having delivered himself of this astounding sentiment, he left Parker open-mouthed, as the postman's rap fell on his vigilant ears.

He scanned the contents of the letter-box.

"My stars! here's missus's fist at last! I'd know that 'P' in a thousand. Thank the Lord! Parker was wrong, for suicides can't write nohow."

Breathless and hatless he fled across the street, bearing the precious missive in his hand. Raymond was kneeling in the sacred edifice, with bent head and folded hands, praying as he had never prayed in his life before for the safe return of his absent wife.

James.

A woman's face in the stained glass window above him brought Charlotte vividly to his mind. Was it a virgin mother—a Magdalen or Martha? No. It was Charlotte—his Charlotte, looking down with sweet forgiving eyes. As he gazed on the figure wrapt in thought, James Jellicoe's stealthy footsteps crept softly up the aisle. A hand was laid on his elbow, a hand which contained the wealth of the world for Raymond—the letter from St. Moritz

(To be concluded.)

Digitized by Google

An Amateur Scoundrel

MLLE. DAUREL stopped in front of the post office. Her right hand held up her skirts. She released them with a sudden movement and thrust her hand into her muff, which she held in her left hand. At the same moment she uttered a cry of surprise. The little purse that she always carried in her muff was no longer there.

"Oh!" she cried, looking to the right and to the left. A few feet away from there stood a man of about fifty years of age, clean shaven, stout, and well dressed. He was looking at her attentively. Then he suddenly came towards her, and with a polite bow and an evil smile he said:

"Mademoiselle, I live near by, in the Rue de la Michodiere, No. 60—M. Chouinot; man of business. If you desire to have news regarding the purse you have been so unfortunate as to lose I can furnish it to you."

M. Chouinot was a fine specimen of a rascal. It must be confessed life was difficult for him. He had endeavoured to make a success of several enterprises, but every time, just as the longed-for end was in view, an obstacle had arisen and overwhelmed him. That obstacle was Justice.

The clients whom he had attempted to dupe had made complaints to the police, and the police had started investigations which had finally brought M. Chouinot face to face with the superintendent of police, the judge on the bench, and then the prison of Mazas. Happily, he had so far been able to avoid long terms of imprisonment, which was something, but he had been obliged in every case to disgorge his gain and restore to their rightful owners the sums of money that had been confided by them to his care.

In short, he had so far been successful only in putting to one side his scruples.

That day he was walking behind Mlle. Daurel. Was he looking at her? It is probable that he was, for Mlle. Daurel deserved it. Rarely has a more charming woman been seen.

That she had the appearance of a smart woman, a supple and graceful figure, beautifully proportioned, could be seen from her back. In front it was seen that she had a lovely face, dark ardent eyes, an adorably chiselled nose, a fine mouth, and besides these an infinite and subtle charm that was indefinable. She was a woman no man could help looking at.

So, as has been said already, M. Chouinot was walking behind Mlle. Daurel. Suddenly he saw that she had dropped something on the pavement. He was about to call her attention to the fact when an idea presented itself to his mind.

"Never trust a first impulse," thought he.

No one happened to be passing at the moment! Why should he not take possession of the article, provided it was worth the trouble?

M. Chouinot opened the purse. For it was a purse that Mlle. Daurel had let fall—a pretty little purse with her name on it in neat silver letters. It contained a fifty franc bank-note, several scraps of paper, and a letter in an envelope ready to be posted.

M. Chouinot rapidly looked over the pieces of paper. They were letters that showed signs of having been read and re-read many times. They were almost in pieces, and all bore the same signature, Henri.

The letter in the envelope was addressed to M. Henri de Prejailles.

So the owner of the purse was answering love-letters?

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed M. Chouinot to himself. Then he found some cards bearing the name "Mlle. Daurel," and M. Chouinot began to think deeply.

"Mlle. Daurel to a male friend, Henri de Prejailles, who is bitterly opposed by her father. Excellent affair!"

Without a tremour he opened the envelope, and taking out the letter began to read.

"It remains to be seen now whether Mlle. Daurel is rich," said M. Chouinot to himself. "In any case it will be sufficient if her friend is. Henri de Prejailles sounds well. I will find this out as quickly as possible."

Talking thus to himself, M. Chouinot kept following Mlle. Daurel. When he saw her stop in front of the Post Office, he stopped too. It was the decisive moment.

"She wants to post her letters now, and discovers that her purse is lost," continued M. Chouinot in monologue. "I will approach her very politely and beg her to come to my office for news of the lost article. There I shall tell her my conditions."

M. Chouinot's deductions were perfectly accurate. Is it necessary to say that when Mlle. Daurel heard M. Chouinot address her, she turned in surprise, which rapidly changed to confusion and terror, and left her without a word of reply.

As soon as she recovered her self-possession, M. Chouinot, who had turned upon his heel as soon as his little speech was concluded, was already disappearing down the street.

Thus she found herself at the mercy of this man. Doubtless he had opened the purse, had read her letters, and now would only restore them to her in return for a large reward. Mlle. Daurel faced the situation.

"There is no use hesitating," she thought; "I must go to this man." And she went.

M. Chouinot was waiting for her, and as soon as she had made known her name she was introduced into the private office of the man of business.

M. Chouinot rose to meet her and bowed.

"Here is your purse," he said to her, holding out the article he had picked up shortly before on the pavement.

Mlle. Daurel, a little surprised, was about to thank him warmly, when he began:

Digitized by Google

"I hand you back your purse, but honesty compels me to state that it does not return to you intact. It still contains, indeed, the note for fifty francs, because money is always sacred. You will also find here your visiting cards. But I thought it was imprudent of you to keep your letters there. An indiscretion is so easily committed. Therefore, I will take care of them for you—oh, the utmost care, I assure you!"

Mlle. Daurel understood. The man had laid a trap for her, and she had tumbled into it.

"But, monsieur," she stammered, "the purse you have picked up is my property. You have no right to keep it, whatever it may contain."

"You think so?"

"I can go to the police, and they will force you to give me back those letters."

"And I can go to the police, and tell them that I picked up nothing; that I know nothing of any purse, and that I, M. Chouinot, a business man, am above all suspicion of such things."

Mlle. Daurel did not insist on this point.

"But," she said, "why do you keep those letters? They have no interest for you. I assure you——"

"Letters of that sort, I assure you, are very nice to keep. M. Henri de Prejailles writes most interestingly, and your own style, madame, is delightful."

Mlle. Daurel flushed. She had loosened for a brief second her grasp on the purse, and that little moment of negligence was going to cost her dearly.

"You forget," continued M. Chouinot, "that everybody who recovers a lost article is entitled to a reward."

"I am prepared to give it to you, monsieur."

"Agreed. But there are rewards and rewards. I think the correspondence of Mlle. Daurel and Henri de Prejailles is worth a good price."

"Oh! monsieur—"

"A very high price, I repeat. For 20,000 francs I will return you your letters. Otherwise I will give them to your father."

Mlle. Daurel became furious.

"But it is a swindle!" she shrieked.

"That is a hasty word for such an exquisite mouth."

"Wretch!"

And Mlle. Daurel threw one of her cards in the face of M. Chouinot. The man of business remained calm and said:

"A second card is useless; I have already taken one. Twenty thousand francs, I repeat. M. Daurel is a builder and rich! 20,000 francs is nothing to him!"

This was said quietly and with calm cynicism.

After her anger a reaction had followed, and Mlle. Daurel grew quiet. She was frightened now, panting and overwhelmed; M. Chouinot did not move or say a word. She sank down on a chair, with her eyes on the ground, listening to this man as if she was being sentenced to death.

Then there was a silence, and Mlle. Daurel rose and walked towards the door. What was she going to do?

That was what M. Chouinot wanted to know.

Several hours later she would return. Probably she would try and bargain with him for 15,000 or 10,000 francs. But he, M. Chouinot, would remain unalterable, 20,000 francs.

And Mlle. Daurel would spread out on the table, not without regrets, twenty banknotes of 1,000 francs each.

At the thought of this M. Chouinot rubbed his hands.

"I am a lucky man; twenty thousand francs for merely picking up a purse."

But the hours passed, and Mlle. Daurel did not return. Probably she needed more time to get the money.

Meanwhile M. Chouinot sang to himself while he waited.

Presently an employé of the office came in.

"Monsieur, there is someone asking for you outside."

"The girl, no doubt?"

"No, sir; it is a gentleman!"

"A gentleman? Show him in."

The visitor came into the office.

"Monsieur," he said, looking M. Chouinot in the eye, "I am M. Henri de Prejailles!"

The man of business took a step backward.

"Oh, do not be afraid. I have no intention of administering to you the thrashing you so richly deserve. It gives me pleasure, however, to say that you are an infamous villain. Having said this, I ask you now to follow me."

"Monsieur!"

M. Chouinot moved further and further away.

Henry de Prejailles took a pistol out of his pocket and put the end of it under M. Chouinot's nose.

"Will you follow me?"

"I will follow you, monsieur; but remember one thing, that your letters are in a safe place, and that you cannot force me to give them up, and—"

"Exactly; meanwhile, walk in front of me, and not a word, or I will shoot you like a dog!"

Below a carriage was in attendance, and M. Chouinot got in. Henri de Prejailles took the seat next him.

"Coachman, drive to Rue Rembrandt, No 34, the house of M. Daurel!"

M. Chouinot trembled, but said nothing. There M. de Prejailles said to his companion as he opened the door:

"Monsieur, you may get out; the moment to execute your threat has arrived. Take my letters to M. Daurel!"

M. Chouinot sprang out. He could scarcely believe his ears. What was going to happen next!

At the door stood a servant dressed in black, with a white tie.

M. Chouinot went towards him.

"Monsieur Daurel?" he asked.

"What, monsieur!" said the servant, "have you not heard?"

"What?"

"Monsieur Daurel died this afternoon!"

M. Chouinot was fairly stunned.

"Oh!" he groaned, "I have no luck at all!"

He was about to walk away, when Henri de Prejailles stepped out of the carriage and held him back.

"You see," he said, "that good fortune does not always come to villains of your sort. You will now restore to me the letters you have stolen. We will go to your office to fetch them, and whatever you do, do not keep us waiting."

Poor M. Chouinot! What could he do? He went to his office with Henri de Prejailles at his heels; he took the letters out of a secret safe. M. Henri took them and placed them in his pocket.

"Now, M. Chouinot," he said, "I will tell you that M. Daurel never felt better in his life. He is alive and well. The servant at the door was my own valet. Twenty francs did the trick. You see the 20,000 francs you spoke of seems a pretty high price compared to that."

And as M. Chouinot raised his arms to heaven in utter despair, he added:

"For the rest, there is always a bullet in this plaything at your pleasure."

And he showed him his revolver.

E. C. Waggener.

Digitized by Google

THE WITCH OF SANTA BARBE.

THERE was a great stir in the tiny village of Santa Barbe. The hilly, picturesque streets were thronged with people decked out in gay attire, though it was not a holiday. In front of the old stone courthouse a mass of people surged, waiting—for what?

Within two weeks the town had become famous, not for its tobacco fields, not for its crops, not for any passing fair, but because Santa Barbe had lately acquired a new saint. Most of the villages possessed saints, but they were old, dried up, and buried centuries before, with the musty relics alone left for the people to worship and adore.

A passing report gathered weight as it spread all over Mexico, that here, in the miserable hamlet of Santa Barbe, a new saint was lying hidden, absolutely new—a girl, young, beautiful, and gifted with marvellous healing powers. The mere touch of her robe in passing was enough, the people said, to cure the vilest disease. In a few hours the people, barefooted and in tatters, were travelling towards Santa Barbe, bringing their sick with them as to a sacred shrine.

Crime and disease found their way hither. "Santa Teresa can take it all away," they said. The magistrates remonstrated: "The town is filled to overflowing. All the wretchedness and filth of Mexico is pouring into Santa Barbe. It must be checked." The decision was a wise one, but what power on earth could stay that rushing river? A quivering mass of humanity seethed outside the lowly hut which the little saint had chosen for her temporary dwelling on this earth. "Come, come!" the people cried. "She will not stay long with us, and when she flies away again to heaven we shall be left in our sins and misery."

Thus Santa Barbe had become world-renowned, even as far as the borders of Mexico stretched, east, west, north, and south. For the people that came sorrowful went away blessing the girl-saint. "It may be that the heart of the gracious Mother has been touched by the sufferings of her children," they murmured, "and she has sent her angel to comfort and heal us." But the magistrates cried out again: "Are the blessed bones of Santa Barbe to be thus mocked and set aside for the whim of a mad people? It must come to an end."

That night, while the people slept, the magistrates climbed the hill to the hut, and with their own hands dragged the girl to the courthouse, and locked her in a prison cell. The soldiers dared not touch her, so those in authority were compelled to perform the deed with their own bejewelled fingers. In the morning the fury of the populace knew no bounds. Their saint, their beautiful saint, has been rudely dealt with, and imprisoned in a cell like a common criminal. The wrath of Heaven must surely descend on Mexico for the rash deed.

The people groaned, and then a few choice spirits bound themselves together, with an oath, to slay the rulers, and deliver the Madonna from her cruel imprisonment.

Oh, the terrible fear that hung over the town! Shops were closed, shutters pulled down, and the people assembled round the old, ivy-hung courthouse.

"Give Santa Teresa back to us," they cried. "Our children weep for her, and we cannot live without her. Where is she, our saint?"

The magistrates held a hurried consultation. There was great danger. Even now no life was safe. Who could answer for the consequences? So the magistrates, five in all, huddled together in the upper chamber, whispering, with their eyes on the windows, while the ceaseless roar of the waiting multitude sounded in their ears. Finally, one of their number rose; he was a tall, thick-set man, with crafty eyes and a Napoleonic jaw.

The magistrates climbed the hill to the hut.

"Cowards, all of you," he said loudly, striking his closed fist on the table before him. "Think you those dogs would dare to rebel? I myself will speak to them. Watch, you shall see them cringe." He approached the window as he spoke

Digitized by Google

and threw open the casement. A cry greeted him from without, at first faint, then growing mighty as the roar of an avalanche, and then dying away to a moan that was succeeded by a deathlike silence.

The magistrate stood there calm; that human storm was nothing to him, and at last his voice broke the stillness.

"Are you all fools, fools to be bewitched by this wretched creature? She is no saint, I know it, I can prove it. She is as you and I, mayhap worse. Nay, I say that she is a witch and is cheating you. For that reason we have brought her here—if she is innocent it will be proven."

"A witch, a witch! Santa Teresa a witch! Blasphemy! Down with him!" and the moan grew to a roar again.

"Listen to me—to me, Don Capello," he shouted, leaning far out so all could see him. "If she is a saint, can she not protect herself? If an angel, will she not use her wings?"

"Santa Teresa, where is she?" was the only reply.

In despair the Don leant still further out. "Your saint heals, yes; but how? Come forward and show me your closed wounds, then I will believe. Carlos, where is he; is his leg well?" The answer came up sadly, "He still limps." "And mother Manita, has her rheumatism gone?" The people gazed at one another in doubt. "Santa Teresa, the blessed saint!" they murmured, "bring her to us."

But the poison had done its work; the people were growing uneasy. "See, they cringe," he whispered to his brother magistrates; "now all is well."

"Hark;" he called aloud to the listening multitude, "she shall go back to her home, now, this afternoon, but first must come the trial. Are you content?" The silence was intense. "It is a good sign," he whispered again, and, closing the casement, he joined the relieved rulers.

They hastened down to the cell where the witch lay imprisoned, and, five against one, the trial went on inside, while without the crowd thronged under the windows like the quickening pulse of a fever patient. There was a hush of painful expectancy, and the air grew heavy and close, as one hour, two hours passed by.

A little apart from the throng stood a man, and of them all he pressed the nearest to the gate, as his eager, restless eyes flashed over the draping ivy and scanned each barred window. Instinctively the people followed his gaze.

"It is Sereno," they whispered. "He loves the Madonna well. It is said that before the wonderful power from above descended on her they were to have married. Now he loves her blindly. His hope is gone."

The rustle of a leaf in the trees, the twitter of a bird startled the watchers. Was it possible that Santa Teresa would use her wings and fly away from them? Suddenly the hush deepened. Every eye was riveted on the great oaken door. It moved on its hinges, and out of the darkness, like a ray of light, stepped a girl. The small, graceful form was draped in a long, black gown, clasped about the waist with a curious gem. It fell to the ground, showing beneath its folds a tiny foot, protected from the rough soil by the Mexican sandal. A face of piercing loveliness, encircled by soft golden curls, looked out from under a black cap, which fitted closely to the beautiful head. Her eyes shone like two stars, and the white face gleamed under the fair hair as the opal in her girdle. Such was the witch and the people's saint.

While she gazed on them the people shaded their eyes. It was pain to look on such a face.

"Santa Teresa, Madonna," they whispered; "she has come back to us."

With a sudden cry Sereno flung himself on the ground.

"Holy Mother! They have put chains on her, the demons! The cruel links cut into her delicate flesh. See!" He shuddered as he lay.

The people fell back in alarm, and again the oaken door creaked, and the magistrates appeared before the multitude. Don Capello stepped forward.

"We have applied the test, my friends; it has failed." And with triumph he pointed to the slender arms

A little apart from the throng stood a man.

weighed down by the heavy irons, and pointed with glee to the deep, cruel scars caused by some burning, fiery instrument of torture. "It is a witch—no saint!" he hissed.

With a groan the people looked on. A witch, their beautiful saint! How could it be? Did the Evil One look out of those beautiful, pitying eyes? Had the devil led those tiny hands in their labour of love? The Don went on in harsh tones addressing the people, while they, sobbing, gazed on the black-robed figure standing before them so silently awaiting its doom. "It is a witch, and must be removed from our midst."

As he spoke, the air grew heavier and closer, the black, threatening clouds seemed to droop as though they would swallow the courthouse, the judges, the prisoners, the people, in crushing embrace. A great fear passed over the crowd, and they trembled and almost ceased to breathe.

Only one, Santa Teresa, stood calmly, with unclouded brow, amidst the dreading multitude. She showed no fear, and ever and anon a smile played about the sensitive mouth, as though they were offering her some beautiful gift, instead of the cruel sentence of death.

The magistrate hesitated, and then went on rapidly: "Teresa Coreno is condemned to be shot, and must die, as a witch in league with the Evil One, to-morrow at sundown." A violent crash of thunder filled the air as he finished speaking. "There is no more danger," he whispered to his associates, "the people are paralysed with fright, and will do as they are bid. The storm has helped us wonderfully," and he rubbed his hands

Digitized by Google

together in triumph. "Teresa Coreno, you may now return to your home. I warn you to try no escape, nor attempt to influence the people in your favour, for you are watched; the least suspicion will throw you again into prison." The girl made no answer, but slowly descended the steps with her eyes on the ground.

Only as she reached the prostrate form of Sereno did she show any consciousness. With a pitying look she laid her hand on his head and murmured a few words of blessing. The crowd started back as she passed, and crouched with averted faces when her lustrous eyes rested for a few minutes upon them.

"A witch, a witch!" they muttered. "She has cheated us with her evil eye." Yes, the temper of the people had changed. They feared instead of loving her, and blind fury possessed them that this, their saint, had so deceived them. Still, they offered no violence.

With one accord they determined to watch the affair through to the end. If a saint, she must protect herself in her innocence, but if guilty, she must die the death of a witch; that was the decision. The magistrates could not have adopted wiser means to gain their ends than in thus committing her to the custody of the people. As their charge they would guard her carefully, lest she should escape and rob them of their spectacle; but had Santa Teresa been imprisoned from their sight they would have rescued her in anger and placed her on a pedestal for ever, as a martyr.

It was a clever ruse, and Don Capello laughed to himself as he watched the slender, girlish figure toiling up the hill to the hut, while the people hung back, dreading to encounter the evil eye. A few, a very few, still believed, and kissed the flowing hem of her gown as she passed, beseeching the blessing which she never refused to give, tenderly as a mother blesses her child. As the witch disappeared through the low doorway, another groan went up from the feverish moving sea, mingled with jeers and hisses. And then as the rain came down in torrents from the lowering clouds, they hurriedly dispersed. Presently not a soul was visible on the green, and the storm raged through the deserted streets.

Saw the witch kneeling beside the open window.

As the night deepened a dark figure stole out from under the draping ivy, and cautiously approached the tiny hut. It was Sereno. He listened for a moment outside the door, then knocked softly. A heavy step approached. After a little fumbling with the bolt, the door was unlatched, and an old man stood out on the threshold.

"Sereno, is it indeed you? I thought you had deserted with the other cowards."

"You know better," the other replied indignantly.

"Yes, you do well to reproach me," the old man retorted; "but you are not a father. I tell you my heart has ached with weeping so that all men appear as foes. It is the way of the world; but to think that those very ones whom my blessed child has healed and comforted should run away at the first shout. Yes, yes, I know you are impatient and did not come to see me," he went on as Sereno moved uneasily. "Go, I can bear it alone. She is there." And he pointed to a low door in the farthest corner of the long, dark room.

Sereno nodded. "Yes, I know."

The door was slightly ajar, and as he looked in he saw the witch kneeling beside the open window, while the evening wind played with the gold hair on that whitest of brows, and tossed its baby curls over her black cap. In vain she tried to raise her tiny hand to smooth those curls; the cruel chains weighed it down. With a half-sigh she clasped her hands together so that the rough iron links rattled, and pressed her lovely head against the wide window-bench.

He dashed out of the door.

"Holy Mother!" she murmured. "Why do they torment me so?"

Sereno stood at the door.

"Madonna!" he exclaimed. The girl raised herself and came forward.

"Sereno, why did you come? I can help you no longer. If it is a wound you must go to the doctor's; my power is gone. I believe the blessed Virgin has taken it away because the wicked men scoff."

With the cry of a hurt child, he fell at her feet. "Madonna, it is you," he gasped. "Did you not hear the sentence, do you not see the danger?"

"Is it the morrow you speak of?" she returned, laying her hand on his head as before. "Sereno, where is thy faith? Will not the Christ that died for us on the cross care for me, his suffering child?"

He caught the delicate wrist, loaded as it was with the chains, and kissed it passionately. "Teresa," he said, "he will help me to save thee."

The girl smiled, saying: "The people will not suffer it; I am no witch, and they know and love me too well to believe it."

"Oh, Madonna!" he cried, "how little you know the Mexicans; they are now as fierce against you as they before loved you. It is as good as a bull-fight, this spectacle to them. Do not trust them, but rely on me alone to save thee."

She would have spoken, but he went on rapidly: "Madonna, this night, while the storm and darkness last, I will bring the black stallion you love so well, outside the window. I will call softly like this: 'Madonna! When you hear, you will come and mount, and we shall ride for our lives, away, far away, from this accursed Mexico."

Sereno was standing now. With all the pride and impulsiveness of early youth he spoke, but ever with that reverence which is born of love. He did not believe, had never believed, in that heavenly power with which she had been accredited by the ignorant populace. Three months before that day they had been betrothed—she merely a beautiful peasant, and he, Sereno, madly in

Digitized by Google

love with her, and in all his hopelessness that love had never faltered.

He remembered now how one evening she had sat on the doorstep, singing softly to the accompaniment of her mandolin. And he, leading a spirited black stallion, climbed the hill to her side, and going to her, had taken her in his arms, and placed the bridle in her tiny hand. "It is my betrothal gift," he had said, smiling at her delight.

Teresa, laying her beautiful head on the glossy, black mane, put both arms round the animal's neck and kissed him. "Be watchful, he is fierce," Sereno cried, warningly, but she had laughed at him, and even as he spoke the spirited creature stood at her side motionless under the caressing touch. She and she alone rode the stallion during the months that followed. Lucifer would suffer none but Santa Teresa and his master to touch him, and she loved him as a brother.

One night Teresa had a dream, and it was then the holy power descended on her. It was something she could not explain. "Sereno," she had said, as he pleaded with her not to leave him alone, "the gracious Mother has revealed herself to me and given me this power. I must go to the people and help them in their sufferings; do not touch me." Sereno wept like a child, but the girl was firm. In a week her fame had spread over Mexico. Teresa became a saint, the people's saint, whom they worshipped and adored. She, still simple as a child, healed the sick and thanked the mighty Father for her power. Sereno, of all the people did not believe. "His beautiful Teresa was no saint," he said firmly, and now he repeated it with a difference, "she is no witch, no witch."

Santa Teresa, half leaning against the rough stone, looked up at Sereno standing before her. There was pity in her glance, but no sign of wavering. "Madonna," he cried in his despair, "be not so wilful; they will shoot you—you, my bride. Come with me, oh, my love, and Lucifer shall carry us out of this fearful land. Speak, will you say yes? Lucifer shall carry us both."

"Yes," she said, simply, "the fiend would bear us away, but while we stay, the Holy Mother will watch over us and keep us from evil." Even as she spoke, Teresa sank on her knees again before the open window, regardless of the lightning flashes, and, with her pale face bowed, moved her lips as in prayer. Sereno shivered as the heavy chains clashed. With one last burning look, he dashed out of the door, past the sleeping father, into the storm. As he did so, a shot rang out, for the house was watched. Sereno had forgotten the fact, though he remembered it now, with added pain, as the ball whistled harmlessly past his ear.

Laid his head on the arching neck.

It was not until the sun had risen high in the heavens that Sereno turned his footsteps homewards. It had been a night of suffering and long drawn out agony, spent in the lonely forest, amid the fiery sparkle of the lightning and the heavy thunder crashes. With indescribable weariness, he flung himself down on his hard couch and tried to sleep.

All that day the affairs of the village might have appeared to the eye of a stranger to go as usual, but

Pressed his passionate kisses on her white forehead.

Santa Barbe was not in its accustomed calm, and the air grew heavy with suppressed excitement.

Every eye was turned, as with common consent, towards the hut on the hill, guarded, as it was, by the bravest and strongest men of Santa Barbe; men who were not to be driven away by spirits, nor alarmed by the flutter of wings. So the day wore on, and as the hour of sundown approached, the shops were again closed, shutters pulled down, and the holiday gowns and coats brought out. Once more the people began to assemble on the open green, for it was a grim sort of festival to many. There was but one subject of conversation: How would their saint, or witch, as they now softly pronounced it, comport herself? Would she show fear, and die like any ordinary mortal? Would she ride away on a broomstick, with the fiends' imps around her, or, and this made them most to tremble, would the Holy Mother in anger send down an angel to carry her out of their sight? So they waited, pale with fright in anticipation, and feverish in waiting.

As the time drew near, Sereno sprang up from his couch. "It is the hour," he said shuddering, and went to the stable where Lucifer stood, saddled and waiting. The noble animal whinnied and stretched his eager nostrils as he saw his master approaching. Sereno took the bridle, and, with a groan, laid his head down on the arching neck which Teresa had kissed three months before.

"Madonna," he sobbed, "why has this thing come to pass?"

The horse trembled and moved uneasily as the hot tears bathed his mane. It was as if he understood, for his eyes shone full of fire and intelligence, and his nervous action seemed to condemn useless sorrow. Sereno raised his head, and now there was strength in his gaze, as he looked into the beautiful eyes of the stallion, kissed him on the forehead, and then sprang into the saddle.

Digitized by Google

With a sudden clang the great gate of the courthouse was flung open, and the five magistrates walked out in solemn procession, Don Capello at their head. As they took their places round the oak, the soldiers entered the hut and led out the one whom all eyes dreaded yet longed to see. Santa Teresa approached the oak rapidly, firmly. Her beautiful face, white as the driven snow, wore an expression of peace, as though she had already reached the gate of the Kingdom of Heaven. As they gazed on her unearthly beauty, the people wavered. Was it not, after all, a crime they were committing?

Fell headlong over the edge.

The voice of Don Capello reassured them.

"Be firm and courageous, ye people. When we hear the whirr of wings it is time eno ugh to falter. Fear not, the witch must die as decreed."

A pitiful cry rose from amongst the multitude. It was the old man, her father. He was not to be quieted, so they led him, sobbing, away, at the command of the magistrates. His weeping only weakened the hearts of the people. Santa Teresa stood before the fatal oak, and Don Capello stepped forward and struck the chains from her wrists.

The soldiers raised their guns. The moment had come. Santa Teresa would soon be a saint in reality. Suddenly, there came a cry from the people. A black horse had bounded into their midst, and Santa Teresa, in an instant, was swept up into the saddle. The report of a dozen guns rang out on the silent air, but, with a mad spring into the air, the animal sped away. For one brief second the people were dazed, but Don Capello was the first to recover himself.

"Quick!" he cried, "out with the horses. She will escape while you fools sit there like so many stones. Put up the guns, we will seize her alive."

As he spoke, he caught his own horse, and climbing heavily into the saddle, started the chase. Before five minutes had come and gone he had hundreds at his back, for presently the entire village was mounted and in pursuit.

Lucifer was ahead, but could he keep there? for he was heavily laden with a double burden. Santa Teresa lay back in Sereno's arms. He feared she was unconscious, and in even that wild flight he clasped her closer and pressed his passionate kisses on her white forehead. In his impatience, each spring of the flying hoofs seemed but as the step of a lame man, and they could not go fast enough—yet Lucifer was straining every nerve, and great drops of blood and foam flecked his heaving sides.

Sereno glanced back in dread. Could they escape? If the pursuers numbered fewer it might have been, but there were hundreds of them—thousands, it seemed to Sereno's agonised gaze. Fierce, strong-limbed Mexicans, fearful when roused, and at their head the cruellest of mankind, Don Capello. Was he to be baffled? A smile of hatred lit up the latter's brutal features. "We are gaining!" he cried. "They cannot go on for ever."

But the danger lay not there. Lucifer flew straight as an arrow, with no thought of dropping until the goal was reached. Suddenly, to Sereno's horror, he found they were being gradually surrounded, for horsemen were everywhere, to the right, to the left, with Don Capello urging on behind. A steep hill loomed up ahead. With ever-increasing speed, Lucifer dashed up the slope. Through bushes, over stones, leaping gullies, onward and upward he fled surefooted, never stumbling nor wanting for breath. Sereno clung on in the muteness of despair, Santa Teresa folded in his fast embrace, her beautiful head resting on his breast. It was a ride to death.

A sharp precipice of several hundred feet lay directly in their path. Behind, on all sides came the people. The horse halted on its very brink, one foot hovering in mid-air, his hind hoofs striking wildly for a footing on the slippery rock. His eyes grew wide in agony, he snorted with a terrible fear and dread of what must come. Sereno glanced back once more. But there was the cruel face of Don Capello reared up like a serpent not ten paces behind.

He hesitated no longer. Santa Teresa opened her eyes. "Holy Mother," she murmured. Then he, with a mighty effort, lifted her in his arms, and leant forward with all his weight on the stallion's neck. The horse struggled, reared back in anguish, but it was too late. The rock crumbled beneath his clinging hoofs, and they fell headlong over the edge, down, down into eternity.

Sereno had at last received his bride. Death had united them for ever.

As the people crowded up the hillside, nothing was to be seen. With a cry of awe they lifted their eyes towards the blue sky, smiling over that scene of woe.

"Santa Teresa," they murmured. "It was the angel, and she has gone from us for ever, our beautiful saint."

Santa Barbe is famed no longer; it has almost been forgotten by the Mexicans themselves. The courthouse lies a mass of ruins, but beneath a mighty oak, gnarled, yet still green, stands a tiny chapel. The new generation, in passing, make the sign of the cross, while they murmur "Santa Teresa."

Frederick Heldon.

TWO GRAND NEW STORIES JUST ABOUT TO COMMENCE.

In the place of "The Treasures of the White God," previously announced,

GOLDEN STAR,

a romance by Mr. George Griffith, who wrote "The Angel of the Revolution." "Valdar the Oft-born," etc.

WILL START NEXT WEEK.

Seven days later Mr. Headon Hill, the author of "Guilty Gold," opens a new novel to be called

THE QUEEN OF NIGHT.

Mr. Griffith being so well known to our readers needs no further introduction than the mere mention of his name, but Mr. Headon Hill is not so well known to them. He will soon, however, endear himself to everyone who is sensible enough to read Short Stories. It would be unfair to give the plot of his story, but this we do say—it is one of the most marvellous stories ever conceived by the mind of man, and will create a sensation.

Digitized by Google

THE STRANGE CASE OF SIR JOHN ROWELL.

THE mysterious Saint Cloud affair had excited and baffled all Paris for a whole month. M. Bermutier, preliminary judge, had been discussing the various aspects of the case before a group of friends.

"It is frightful," exclaimed one of the ladies, "almost supernatural! Nothing will ever be known."

"Yes, madam," said the magistrate, turning towards her, "probably nothing will ever be known. As for the word 'supernatural,' it has simply no place here. We have here a crime cleverly conceived, very cleverly executed, but so involved in mystery that we cannot disentangle it. Once before, however, I had to investigate a case in which there really seemed something fantastic, and which had finally to be abandoned unsolved."

"Oh, do tell us about it," cried several ladies with one voice.

M. Bermutier smiled gravely, as became a judge, and began: "I was preliminary judge at Ajaccio, and my chief duties were, of course, in connection with affairs of vendetta. One day I learnt that a little villa at the end of the gulf had been taken by an Englishman for several years. Everyone was speculating about this singular person, who stayed with a single man-servant, never leaving the house except to hunt or fish. He never spoke to anyone, and every morning he used to practise pistol-shooting.

"Rumour said he was some great personage who had left his country for political reasons. Then he was reported to be hiding, after having committed some terrible crime. I could learn nothing about him except that his name was Sir John Rowell. I had him closely watched, but nothing suspicious was ever reported to me.

"One evening, in passing, I observed him smoking in his garden, and saluted him. He invited me to enter and drink a glass of beer. I at once accepted. He received me most courteously, and we chatted pleasantly on many subjects. In reply to my questions on his mode of life, he told me that he had been a great hunter in Africa, the Indies, and America.

"'I have hunted man, too, a good deal,' he added. He then invited me in to see his collection of firearms. The salon was hung with black silk embroidered with gold. 'It is Japanese cloth,' he said.

"But a strange object in the centre of a large panel caught my eye. It was black, and stood out clearly on a square of red velvet. I approached. It was a hand—a man's hand, not a skeleton hand, white and clean, but a black shrivelled hand with yellow nails and muscles laid bare. The bones, which had been cut clean near the middle of the forearm, as if by a hatchet, showed dark stains as if of old blood. An enormous iron chain was welded round the wrist of this horrible member, fastening it to the wall, by a ring strong enough to hold an elephant.

"'Why!' I exclaimed, 'what is that?'

"'It is my greatest enemy,' the Englishman answered quietly. 'It came from America. It was severed by a sabre, skinned by a sharp flint, and dried in the sun for eight days.'

"I touched the human relic. It must have belonged to some giant. The fingers were excessively long, and were held by enormous tendons, to which pieces of skin still adhered in places.

"'This man must have been very strong,' I said.

"'Oh! yes,' he replied, 'but I was stronger. I have had the chain made to hold it.'

"'This chain is useless now,' I said, thinking he was joking; 'the hand can't run away.'

"'It always wants to get away, though,' Sir John Rowell answered gravely. 'The chain is necessary.'

"I thought he must be either a madman or a humbug, but his face remained as passive and impenetrable as ever before my searching look. I changed the subject, and began to admire his weapons. I observed three loaded revolvers lying at hand in the room, as if the man lived in constant fear of an attack. I returned to see him several times, and then my visits ceased. All had now become accustomed to him, and his presence had, therefore, become indifferent to all.

"A year passed. One morning my servant awakened me and announced that Sir John Rowell had been assassinated during the night. Half an hour later, I was in the Englishman's house along with the chief police authorities. The valet was standing distractedly before the door. At first I suspected this man, but he was entirely innocent. The body of Sir John was lying on its back in the middle of the salon. Everything showed that a terrible struggle had taken place. The victim had been strangled. His face was swollen and discoloured, and bore a look of deadly fear. He held something between his clenched teeth, and the neck, covered with blood, was pierced by five holes which seemed to have been made with some sharp iron points. A doctor arrived. After carefully examining the five strange impressions in the flesh, he said:

"'Why, it looks as if the man had been strangled by a skeleton.'

"I shuddered, and glanced at the spot where I had formerly seen the horrible dried hand. It was no longer there. The chain was hanging in its place, broken.

"I knelt over the body, and found between the clenched teeth a finger of the missing hand, cut, or rather gnawed off at the second joint, by the victim's teeth. We then made an investigation, but nothing was discovered. Neither doors, windows, nor furniture had been tampered with. The two watch-dogs had not even been aroused. Although a minute search was instituted throughout the whole island nothing was ever discovered.

"Well, one night, three months after the crime, I had a frightful nightmare. I saw the horrible hand running like a scorpion or a spider up and down my curtains and walls. The hideous member galloped round my room, using its fingers like claws. Next day the vile thing itself was actually brought to me. It had been found in the cemetery on Sir John Rowell's grave. The fore-finger was missing.

"This, ladies," said the judge, as he concluded, "is my story. I know nothing more."

* * * * *

"But that is neither *dénouement* nor explanation!" cried one of the terror-stricken ladies. "We shall not sleep to-night unless you tell us at least how you think it occurred."

"Oh, I think," said he, with a judicial smile, "simply that the legitimate owner of the hand was not dead, but that he came to fetch it with his remaining one. I never could tell, though, how he did it." N. N.

Digitized by Google

A Dowry of Diamonds

By Iza Duffus Hardy.

Author of "In the Springtime of Love," etc.

"It's a lonely-looking place," said Harry Osmond to himself, letting his horse fall into a walk as he drew near the house in search of which he had ridden out. "A lonely kind of place for her! I suppose this *is* the house. It can't be any other," and he ran over in his mind the instructions he had received on leaving Orodelphia City—we should call it a village here, but a barn, a bar, and a general "store" make up a city in that far West wherein Harry Osmond had spent the best years of his life.

"Go straight on; leave Red Cross Cañon on your left; keep on till you come to Blue River Falls, then bear round to your right by the woods till you get out in the open valley, and there you'll see Kenrick's place right before you."

So this was "Kenrick's place," evidently—a small, bare barrack-like wooden house, suggesting a grotesque resemblance to a Noah's Ark, with all the paint worn off, set down in the middle of a strip of arid plain, its scant green burnt yellowish under the sun's merciless glare, walled in by dark, unbroken masses of the great redwoods on one side, by a jagged range of hills on the other. The general aspect of the house, and its position, produced an impression of forlornness and desolation in Harry Osmond's mind. He recalled the comments which his informant had added to the instructions in regard to the road.

"He's a queer sort, is old man Kenrick! They say he nearly blowed up Saucel City with his dratted experiments. We wouldn't have him here in Orodelphi, so he's built himself a place a few miles out. He comes in and out pretty often. There's some folks in the city won't send for no one but the old doctor when they're sick, but the gen'l opinion is that he's a mighty queer lot."

And Osmond was aware that a certain mild curiosity with which he, as a visitor to "old man Kenrick," felt himself being regarded, was mingled with a spirit of doubt as to the welcome he would receive at his journey's end—that complacent sort of doubt which was evidently satisfactory to those who had probably not been warmly welcomed at Kenrick's. The reflection of this doubt unconsciously entered into his own mind as he pulled up his horse at the door, and paused a moment before dismounting.

He saw no one at the windows; not even a dog barked, not a cow grazed near the house. While the horseman outside lingered and looked and thought what a lonely place it was for a girl, a girl gazing out of one of the windows, out of his sight at the other side of the house, was thinking much the same—not discontentedly; the cloud of discontent never marred the serene sweetness of Grace Kenrick's face, but with a faint stirring of vague longing that "was not akin to pain."

In the dead stillness of the hour and place she heard the trample of the horse's hoofs, the sound of someone stopping at the door, knocking on it with his knuckles, as there was no other means of gaining admittance. Dr. Kenrick had never thought it worth while to put up bell or knocker.

Grace went to the door and opened it. A tall, broad-shouldered young man stood there; bearded, sunburnt, with good-humoured dark eyes that lit up with a light of pleasure as they fell upon her face.

He looked at her for a minute without speaking, as if waiting for her recognition.

"You don't know me, then?" he said. "And if it was in the uttermost corner of the earth I'd have known you, Miss Grace, though you're changed somehow, yet still the same."

The girl did not find fault with his speech for its inconsistency.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, with a brilliant smile of surprise and pleasure. "How could I have forgotten you, even for a moment? But there is excuse for me—you are changed! I don't know how I know you!" she added laughingly.

"Does five years change a fellow as much as all that?" he rejoined a little deprecatingly. She had held out one hand, but he had taken both, and was holding them close in the familiar clasp of old acknowledged friendship.

"Is it only five years?" she said.

"Hardly more. I shouldn't think it *was* five years, looking at you."

And indeed Grace Kenrick at twenty was scarcely altered from what she had been at fifteen. A slender girl, with soft brown hair, and a delicate, pale complexion, with irregular, yet somehow attractive features—a gentle, serious, sometimes dreamy expression—her great beauty in the large, soft, grey eyes, with their limpid candour and almost child-like sweetness and innocence—she was, as a woman, just what she had been as a child, except for a trifle more maturity of form and feature, a shade of added thoughtfulness and

Digitized by Google

gravity—a look almost too thoughtful for one still so young.

The years that had left her almost unchanged had developed Harry Osmond from a fair smooth-faced youth to a sun-bronzed man. He had filled out in figure, too, and was now a splendid young fellow, who looked handsome, strong, and manly, in his picturesque sombrero hat, his riding-coat, and his jack-boots.

Of course they soon came to the questions:

"How did you come here?" and "How has it been with you all this time?"

How Mr. Osmond came there was soon told. Since he had said good-bye to the Kenricks and started on a prospecting tour from Saucel City some five years before, he had spent his time in the mining district of the Black Hills; he had done fairly well there, was now on a holiday trip, had left his claim for a time in his partner's care, was on his way to San Francisco, and had made a *détour* chiefly for the purpose of visiting his old friends.

How things had been with Grace Kenrick all this time she also made short work in the telling. She was very well, and the Doctor, her father, was very well, and she liked this place well enough, though it had seemed a little quiet at first, after Saucel City. Father liked a quiet life for his experiments; he had a big laboratory at the back of the house; but on this subject she did not seem inclined to dilate. Osmond remembered that when he had left Saucel City, Dr. Kenrick, the leading doctor there, was enjoying a large and flourishing practice; he wondered how much truth there was in the gossip of Orodelphia, and whether the doctor's experiments made him indeed so undesirable a resident?

Presently Dr. Kenrick came in. He was a man of rather slightly-built, wiry figure, of average height; his face was old and wrinkled, the lower part hidden by a heavy, untrimmed, wild-looking beard. Hair and beard were so thickly streaked and patched with grey, fast turning to white, that scarce a vestige of their original colour was discernible; but the eyes were young still—large, clear, and bright, full of latent fire, wide with waking dreams—they looked out from under the grizzled brows in strange and almost startling contrast to the haggard, parchment-coloured face.

Grace went up to him with a happy, tender smile, and took his hand as she said:

"It is Harry Osmond, father! Would you have known him?"

The Doctor did not seem to take much interest in the question whether Harry Osmond was altered past recognition or not. He greeted him kindly and hospitably enough, with a cordiality that, although it was no more than lukewarm, clearly owed its moderation simply and only to the fact that his mind was too pre-occupied for him to spare much thought for the visitor.

Grace soon slipped away, on household cares intent. They kept no help—help in that country being hard to get and harder still to keep—so that Grace Kenrick's part in life was very far from being the ornamental alone. She bustled blithely in and out, getting the supper ready. Osmond jumped up to help her, and insisted on carrying the tray for her. One of the fruit dishes was broken, so Grace ran to the laboratory and came back with a cracked retort, into which she put the preserved peaches; this seemed to both the young people an excellent joke, although the Doctor, as soon as he realised the nature of it, started up in a hurry to assure himself that it was only a damaged and useless retort on which they had laid irreverent hands. The two young people laughed and chattered as they went to and fro between kitchen and parlour; the elder man looked on with a sort of mild awakening of interest in things around him.

Harry Osmond became a frequent visitor at the Kenricks'. He brought a new gladness into Grace's quiet life, a new sunshine into her smile. The Doctor was pleased to see his girl bright and happy. Grace was the apple of her father's eye; there was only one hope, one dream, that he held even dearer than his daughter. Yet somehow, until now that he saw the brightening effect of a little cheerful companionship—the healthy influence of another young, strong, vigorous personality upon her—he had never recognised that her quiet, lonely life of daily household work, pleasureless, friendless, needed some relaxation and recreation. It suited *him* so well, it had never occurred to him to doubt that it was equally well fitted for her.

Young Osmond's visits did not inconvenience *him* nor interfere with *his* way of life at all. If he were busy in his laboratory, Grace did not disturb him for Harry Osmond's coming and going; she made no stranger of this old familiar friend, who had been her childhood's companion. It was long since anyone had visited at the Kenricks' on such free and privileged terms, and the Doctor, somewhat to his own surprise, presently began to find that young Osmond's society was rather welcome to him than otherwise.

Osmond remembered some of the Doctor's theories, and certain allusions to the nature of his experiments,

A girl gazing out of one of the windows.

which had been dropped in the olden days. Little forgotten words and trifles floated up in his memory, and roused his curiosity in regard to Doctor Kenrick's present pursuits, although delicacy withheld him from

Digitized by Google

making any observation to Grace, or inquiring of her concerning her father's occupations.

One day, however, the Doctor himself said to his daughter:

"Have you told young Osmond, Grace?"

"Told him what, father?"

"Our secret."

"No, father, I didn't know whether you would like him to know anything about it."

"He seems an intelligent young fellow," the doctor observed musingly, "and I should think he might be trusted. He is not one of the babbling sort, I fancy."

He was soon taken freely into the family confidence.

Grace placed her own interpretation on these remarks, and the next time Harry Osmond went through the usual form of duty inquiries about her father, she added to the usual answer, that he was busy in his laboratory, the observation:

"He is at a very interesting stage of his experiments just now," and Osmond was prompt to perceive by her manner, no longer restrained, as it had hitherto been, that she was ready and willing to enter upon the subject of those mysterious "experiments."

"I remember your father used to have a theory that certain secrets of the alchemists of old were not lost beyond discovery. They would be priceless secrets indeed if we could unravel them! If, instead of digging the gold out of the mines—which is pretty hard work I can tell you—we could learn the making of it!"

"My father thinks," said Grace, with a tender smile of hope and trust, "that the transmutation of gold is a hopeless dream! But there is something more precious than gold, the secret of the making of which might be learned. You know—we all know—that the diamond is only carbon in its purest form! My father has devoted years of his life to the study of this subject. He is steadily working out his theory; I think we are getting very near the light now!" and her soft eyes lit up with a beautiful confidence.

"I see, I see!" said Harry Osmond; and he did see, not only the father's dream, but the daughter's devoted faith.

When the ice had been once broken, and it was understood that Osmond was aware of the nature of the Doctor's pursuits, he was soon taken freely into the family confidence. Grace was glad to be able to talk to some sympathetic friend upon the subject which absorbed her father's very life, and held possession, though to a lesser extent, of hers. For long years past, while the external interests of everyday existence came and went, just skimming the surface, this secret pursuit had been the whole deep under-current of their lives.

It was an incalculable comfort to Grace to feel herself free to allude openly to what hitherto had been spoken of only between father and daughter, shut down in silence and reserve.

Even the Doctor, having once broken the seal of his secrecy, also found it a relief to talk to Harry Osmond about his life-long dream, which he confidently hoped soon to realise. No one knew of the real drift of his experiments except one or two men, who paid occasional long visits to the Kenricks' place, bringing with them mysterious and bulky parcels—who were assisting him in the construction of the needed apparatus, and who were sworn to secrecy; and even these had not been fully taken into his confidence. None, indeed, not even Grace, knew what were the ingredients by the employment of which he hoped to bring about the desired result. That was his great secret, religiously kept from even his daughter. Whatever these ingredients were, his idea was that their mixture in certain proportions and fusion under a powerful pressure would produce the crystallisation of carbon into its purest form—the diamond.

There were, he admitted, many difficulties in the way—one hitherto insurmountable difficulty had been the application of a compressive force of sufficient power—the construction of a machine strong enough to stand the shock.

But patient study and practical experiment had brought him now very near the goal. The hour of success was at hand—so he assured Harry Osmond. In his laboratory even now stood a great globe of solid iron, with a passage drilled through it to a circular chamber hollowed out in the centre.

This chamber was to be charged with certain materials, the composition of which was the great secret, and its contents fired by a powerful battery.

He had tried similiar experiments before, though hitherto with no other result than the shattering of the apparatus, and the smashing of windows in the neighbourhood—vigorous protests of indignant neighbours—and enforced retreat of the Doctor and his belongings to a more secluded locality.

But this time he believed he had insured against failure. The apparatus was the strongest that could be made; the time for the final trial was almost ripe—not quite—a few more final experiments had yet to be made—one or two possibly weak points to be guarded. And here a little difficulty occurred. To finally assure himself of the security of certain parts of the theory he had

Digitized by Google

so long been working out needed expensive materials. And money was scarce at Kenricks'. Only Grace, always bravely and faithfully standing between her father and all domestic anxieties, from which her care could guard him, knew *how* scarce. She was up early and late, working hard to keep the household wheels running smoothly—doing all she could to save, but the poor girl could not coin money. The Doctor began to chafe at feeling himself delayed and hindered in his great work by what seemed to him so petty and paltry a thing as money, or the want of it.

"I have spent all my means and all the best years of my life," he said once, to Harry Osmond, in an unusual expansion of confidence. "The little fortune that should have been Grace's—her mother's dowry, which should have come to the child—all gone! The returns will be a thousandfold the cost—I should be a fool to grudge it—but straightened circumstances cause a little temporary annoyance and delay sometimes. My researches are expensive—they could not be carried on without diamonds. Diamond dust was the first thing necessary, and is the last—the last before the production of the perfect gem!"

It was on a Sunday, and Harry Osmond had done honour to the day and to the object of his visit by arraying himself in his best. He had bought his diamond studs and handsome solitaire ring with his own hard-earned dollars; he took a boyish pleasure in their sparkle; and he put them on to visit Grace simply because they were the best he had. He caught a yearning glance in Dr. Kenrick's eyes as they turned for a moment on these jewels—only for a moment, and then were hastily averted, as if the Doctor was fairly tearing that eager gaze away.

"Why, now—would *these* be any use to you?" said the young man cordially.

The Doctor's eyes glistened.

"No, no!" he said, drawing back. "They would save weeks of time and labour! They would turn probability into certainty, make assurance doubly sure. But I won't—no, no, I wouldn't rob you of them, Osmond, my dear boy! Likely you set store by those stones? They may have a value to you apart from their price, and any gems I have must be pounded—pulverised! For I must test the pure dust of the diamond yet once more."

"You're right welcome," rejoined Osmond, drawing the ring off his finger.

"You mean it?" said the Doctor, evidently resisting by sheer force the impulse to pounce on the jewel.

"With all my heart," the young man protested. "Why, what earthly good can these bits of trinkets be to *me*, compared to what they'll do if they can be the slightest help to you in your important experiments? See, now, here, take them all," and he loosened the studs.

And now the day drew near when the great trial was to be made. Before it came Harry made up his mind to speak to Grace. He told her, in the rough and broken phrases that are the eloquence of deep feeling, how dear she was to him, and that she would be even dearer still if, by any mischance, the experiment that was to crown her father's lifelong ambition resulted in failure.

He knew she could not leave her father while the great question was unsettled; he would never ask her to desert the old man, nor to fail in that daughterly devotion which was the first thing for which he had loved her; he only asked her to give him a grain of hope to live on—only wished her to know that he was hers, heart and soul, and hers only, for ever, whatever might be "the end of that day's business!" And, if all he had asked to make him happy was hope, he was more than happy when he pressed his first kiss on Grace's sweet lips, and knew that he had won the love that was his heart's desire.

Of course, she could not enter into any thoughts of marriage in the present state of things. While her father's aim was unattained, the result of his long labours uncertain, her place was by his side. But now the crisis was near. If all went well, and the great object were successfully accomplished, then—then they might talk things over. And Osmond, having gained all, and more than all, that he had dared to hope for, was well content and light of heart when the day for the important ordeal came.

Two friends of the Doctor, who had assisted him in the construction of the apparatus, came to help in its transportation to a safe distance from the house. They conveyed it out by twilight to a lonely spot, secure from interruption.

The Doctor had charged the central chamber with the composition, of which the ingredients and their proportions and preparation constituted his great secret. This charge was to be fired and fused by means of a galvanic battery. They laid the connecting wires, and fixed the battery at what the Doctor deemed a prudent distance from the machine. They stood round the battery in the deepening dusk, a silent and anxious group of four men, and a woman—for Grace would not be left behind. Harry Osmond looked at her as she stood by her father's side, and even in the twilight he saw, if with his mind's eye rather than with his bodily sight, the loyal loving look on her pale face, the steadfast light in her shining eyes. He took a step that brought him between her and the machine, to shield her, so far as he could, in case of any accident.

The Doctor touched the handle of the battery.

There was a crash and a blinding cloud of dust. For a moment the watchers caught their breath, and, with

He told her how dear she was to him.

one impulse, drew closer together. Then the Doctor, shaking himself free from Grace's clinging hold, seized the lantern, and rushed forward. The iron globe had

Digitized by Google

burst, and lay in pieces. He knelt down to examine the fragments, and the rays of the light wavered and flickered as the hand that held the lantern shook. Osmond, the first to follow him, took the lantern from his trembling fingers, and stooped to help in the examination. The others joined, and all eagerly inspected and searched among the scattered fragments of the broken machine.

Not a word was spoken until Grace at last whispered, softly touching Harry's arm:

"Is there—is there—any sign of success?"

He looked round at her and hesitated, in anxious silence, for a moment or two; then, as no one else answered, he said reluctantly:

"I am afraid—there—there doesn't seem to be any—any result."

But the Doctor knelt and patiently and persistently sought amongst the shattered pieces still.

"Father, dear," Grace presently whispered tenderly, "hadn't we better be going home?"

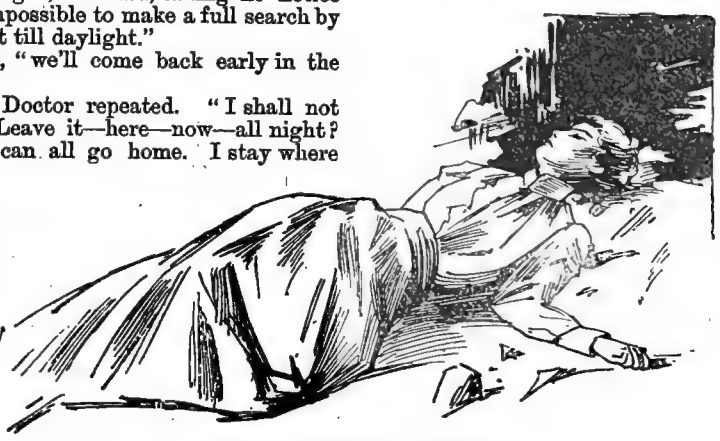
"I must look by daylight," he said, taking no notice of her words. "It's impossible to make a full search by this light. I must wait till daylight."

"Yes," said Osmond, "we'll come back early in the morning."

"Come back?" the Doctor repeated. "I shall not stir from this place! Leave it—here—now—all night? No; I wait here. You can all go home. I stay where I am."

Grace laid her fingers lightly on her father's shoulder, and gently but firmly took the matter into her own hands.

"I will go home and fetch some blankets and things, and come back here and camp out with father," she said.



But Grace would never open her eyes.

And so it was decided; it seemed, indeed, the best way. It was a fine night—a clear, dry, and dewless Californian night; and although Harry did not at all like the idea of Grace "roughing it" and camping out, he still could not but admit that it would probably do her no harm. The other men proposed division of forces, one of them remaining with the Doctor, the other accompanying Grace and Osmond to the house to fetch wraps, coverings, and comforts for the night; but finally the whole quartette set off on this errand, the Doctor protesting he would rather be left alone awhile, and Osmond being strongly of the mind that four are much better company than three.

He walked with Grace, and did his best to cheer her with the idea that failure might be only a temporary postponement of the attainment of the longed-for end. They returned laden with materials for rigging up a sort of tent for Grace, and plenty of wraps for her father. Harry Osmond said that he too would camp out that night; the other two men, having given their assistance in the arrangements, decided to go home to their hotel; they possibly thought the daylight investigation was not worth waiting for. With Western taciturnity and good-feeling they did not say much, but bade the Doctor "keep up his spirits," for "he'd do it yet—maybe!" added the less sanguine of the two.

The level rays of the morning sun were streaming broad and bright across the valley, and Harry Osmond, rolled up in his Mexican blanket, was sleeping soundly still. In his dreams he heard the name so often in his mind, of which his heart was so full that it seemed only natural it should echo in his sleep! But the sound grew louder—the call pierced through the shadows of dreamland.

"Grace! child! wake up! Grace—Osmond—look here! *look here!*"

"Eh—what? What's up?" exclaimed Harry starting, and scrambling out of his blanket.

The Doctor's worn face was flushed and transfigured with a look of wild hope and trembling joy; his eyes shone with a strange light, as if his whole being were strained to the very verge of sanity. In the palm of his quivering hand he held out to show them a pinch of sparkling dust.

Grace and Harry hastened to inspect the glistening atoms. Somehow they carefully avoided looking in each other's eyes. That tiny pinch of shining dust—was it in very truth real diamond dust?

Grace strove to convince herself that she had no doubt. She could not dash her father's joy by a question of it. He knew best. She soon persuaded herself to share his confidence. He harped exultantly on the theme all the way home. The experiment had been no failure. Here, in these few grains of glittering dust, was the successful result! The only drawback was that the result was small—certainly very small. This was the pure material of the diamond—only there was so very little of it! A little more care, a little harder study, a little change in the conditions, a stronger machine—so strong as to stand the shock without bursting and thus diffusing the force, and next time they would see the success of which these atoms gave the sure and certain promise!

He was so confident that Harry Osmond, who had at first looked doubtfully at the little pinch of precious dust, began to be persuaded—or at least in his heart regarded it as an open question. It might indeed be as the Doctor declared it was. On the other hand, Osmond could not entirely exclude from his mind a suspicion that it might be only a fragment of felspar—some grain of crystal or quartz pulverised by the shock.

After this eventful night the Doctor resumed his studies and experiments with renewed energy. With wild and feverish eagerness he devoted himself to the pursuit of that long-sought object on which it seemed to him now that his hand was at last about to close.

The difficulty of constructing an apparatus of sufficient strength to stand the shock that his trusted globe of iron had proved incapable of bearing, exercised the Doctor's mind, and presently formed a plan. Some distance down the valley, near the opening of a wide gully leading back into the hills, a most lonely and deserted spot, was a stretch of barren stony land, strewn

Digitized by Google

with great rocks and boulders. On these the Doctor cast his eye. The loneliness of the situation attracted him.

He proposed to utilise one of the largest boulders for his purpose. A hole was to be drilled deep into the heart of the solid rock, into this molten iron was to be poured; then through the cooled iron a passage was to be bored, and the chamber to hold the secret composition scooped out in the centre. Finally, the rock itself was to be bound round with broad and massive clamps of iron. By means of this device he was convinced he could employ a battery of even greater power than before, without risk of the bursting to pieces of the apparatus.

Time slipped away, and the long-anticipated day of the great trial came at last.

"You're pale, my darling," said Harry Osmond tenderly, to his betrothed. "Don't fret yourself with anxiety! Nothing's worth fretting your sweet self about! Success means fame and fortune; but *we* have what is dearer than fame—and more than all the money in the world could buy for us!"

"It is not money—no, nor fame! that *I* care for," murmured Grace; "it is that my father's very life is bound up in this!"

"It will all go well, dearest. You'll see it will be all right," he answered soothingly, anxious to reassure her, although he felt in his heart that he was not so very sure himself.

And now the hour had come!

This time it was broad daylight. Dr. Kenrick, taking warning from his experiences on the occasion of the former trial, had resolved not to trust again to lantern light for the important examination of the results.

Dead silence had fallen upon all the group.

They glanced from the great rock to the battery with its motionless wires, from the battery to the lever-handle in the doctor's hands.

A moment, and he grasped and pressed it.

There was a deafening, rending crash, that shook the solid earth beneath their feet and darkened the sky above their heads. Not a man kept footing or breath or sense in the terrific concussion. Riven rock and shattered iron flew high and wide. Far off, birds fell dead from the shock, and the alarmed neighbours from many a mile round started for the scene of disaster.

But long before the nearest neighbour on the fleetest horse could reach the spot the stunned and bruised members of the company of fortune-seekers had picked themselves up from the ground—all but one!—and the worst was known.

Harry Osmond, for a few moments stunned and dazed, but otherwise uninjured, sat up and looked round for Grace. Side by side, as they had stood, father and daughter had fallen, and both lay motionless. Harry staggered over to them, and fell on his knees by Grace.

In a minute or two the Doctor also moved, sighed, raised himself on his elbow, and when the mists had cleared from his dazed eyes, and he looked at the little group beside him, he dragged himself up and bent over his daughter.

"Grace, why Gracie!" he said hoarsely. "She's fainted, the poor child! Come, Gracie, rouse up, my girl! Speak to me! Why do you look like that, Harry? She's only fainted—girls often faint! why even I—I—was a little faint and giddy myself! Come, Gracie, my brave girl, rouse up! Open your eyes and speak to your old father!"

But Grace would never open her eyes and speak to him, nor to any other any more in this world. A large splinter of iron had struck her on the head. Life pulsated feebly on at her heart for awhile, a little while; but she never gave word, or look, or sign of consciousness again.

* * * * *

A few days after the tragic event of this too-memorable night, one of the leading jewellers in San Francisco was called into the parlour behind his "store" to see a gentleman who wished to speak to him on particular business. The visitor, an old man with white hair and beard, and bright, restless eyes, looked haggard, untidy, dusty, and travel-worn, but his manner was unmistakeably that of a gentleman, as he informed the jeweller that the business on which he had called was disposal of some splendid diamonds.

"It is a rare chance I have to offer you," he said, fumbling in his breast and producing a little wash-leather bag. "They are perfect stones, of the purest water. I think you'll say you have never seen finer diamonds. I have only brought a few for your inspection; but there are more where these came from! I would not part with them, but they are my daughter's dowry; I want to turn them into hard cash for her. My intention," he continued, untying the knotted string of the little bag with eager fingers, "is to keep a few of the very finest stones to be set for her as a bridal present to wear on her wedding-day, and turn all the rest into hard dollars for her dowry."

The jeweller nodded, not unsympathetically.

"Well, let us look at them," he said.

The old man carefully poured the contents of his bag upon the table.

The jeweller frowned impatiently, with disgusted surprise. He did not mind a good joke, but this was an excessively poor one—the poorest of practical jokes, to befool him into listening to a tale of diamonds, and then turn out some broken bits of a common glass bottle! A few splinters of a smashed bottle—a paltry, shabby jest indeed!

He was pushing the glittering fragments away roughly, with an angry look of contempt, when he noticed the fond and almost ecstatic look the visitor bent on his bits of bottle-glass, the earnest, exultant, agitated tone in which he was dilating on the perfection of these priceless and flawless gems.

The jeweller's frown softened into a expression of pitying comprehension. He saw now that this was no jest.

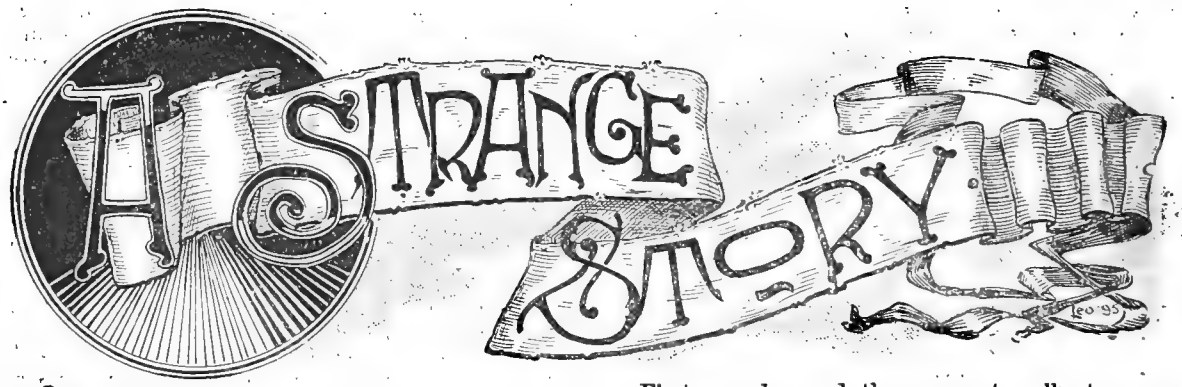
When Harry Osmond, who had followed fast upon the Doctor's track, traced him that evening, he found him in a small room at one of the best hotels, counting over his treasures.

"I wish Gracie would come," he said. "I feel to-night that I'm old, and lonely and ailing. People are very kind—but it's my own flesh and blood I want now. Seems to me that Grace is a long time. I hope she will come soon, and I'll go home with her."

"It won't be very long, I think, before Grace is with you again," Harry replied, with a quiver in his voice. "And meanwhile, you'll let me stay with you, and I'll look after you and try to be all a son could be to you, until—until Grace comes to fetch you home."

It was a long time that the broken old man lingered, helpless and harmless, bereft of reason and strength, in a world wherein he had no longer part nor place; but Harry Osmond kept his word and devoted himself to the care of this poor wreck of life until the summons came that re-united father and daughter, and Dr. Kenrick's great secret died with him.

Digitized by Google



THE inhabitants of the usually sleepy little town of Eminster had for once in a way thrown aside their habitual apathy, and the veriest stranger would have said at once—and he would have been right, too—that something unusual was about to take place.

The annual assizes were being held, and although the calendar of crime was not a heavy one, it comprised one case that had for weeks past excited the greatest interest in the town and neighbourhood; and it was now about to culminate in the prisoner being put upon his trial, charged with the murder of a man, name unknown.

Gathered about at street corners were little groups of men, all eagerly discussing the coming trial; in respect to the prisoner's guilt or evidence there was a decided divergence of opinion.

"You see, the body ain't been found, that's one thing in his favour."

"Yes, but his hat have; there's no getting away from that."

"Then there's the blood on the——"

"Yes, but there weren't none found on his hands, or his clothes, was there now? Answer me that."

"Well, seeing as how he most likely carried him head downwards, as being most easy-like—the same as I was a showing you the other night, you know, with my boy Willum—it ain't to be expected as he'd have any blood about him. No! no! he was too artful for that; it's my belief he'll hang anyway."

"Hallo! here he comes."

A closed conveyance came up the street, driven at a rapid pace by a policeman out of uniform, but, nevertheless, a constable all over. A uniformed officer sat by his side on the box, and inside, as the vehicle passed rapidly by, could be seen two other men in blue and the prisoner.

There was a rush towards the Town Hall to get a view of the latter; but his custodians took the precaution of going into the yard at the back, and the curiosity of the onlookers was defeated.

Inside the precincts of the court every inch of space was occupied by an eager and excited body of spectators, and there was the usual hum of murmured conversation, until the usher shouted: "Silence, silence in the court," and the judge entered and took his seat.

The twelve good men and true composing the jury were immediately sworn, and filed into the jury-box, and then every eye in court was turned towards the door through which it was known the prisoner would make his appearance.

First a warder, and then a smart, well-set-up, muscular young fellow, aged apparently two or three-and-twenty, with a somewhat foreign class of features, a profusion of black curly hair, and a dejected look upon his face that denoted how the several weeks' confinement he had already undergone had told upon him—needless to say, this was the prisoner, Martin Smith.

When he had taken up his position in the dock after taking one swift look round the court, and apparently failing to recognise anyone present, he looked earnestly at the jury, as if to try and discover what manner of men they were in whose hands his fate was so soon to be placed.

To the usual question: "Guilty or not guilty?" he responded in a distinct tone: "Not guilty, my lord."

There was a rustle of expectancy as the counsel for the prosecution rose in his place.

"My lord, and gentlemen of the Jury, the case I have to lay before you is one of extreme mystery, and the only evidence I am prepared to offer will be almost, although not entirely, circumstantial. It will be proved that on the 20th June last, the prisoner came to the neighbouring town of Lymeton by rail, and that he travelled by the hotel bus from the station to the "Golden Cross," being the only passenger. Arrived there he inquired if he could have a bed for the night, and a room was assigned to him. He partook of some refreshment in the coffee room, and, having done so, wrote two or three letters which he himself went to post, having asked in what direction the post office lay. The recipients of these letters have not been traced, and the incident has therefore no further bearing upon the case.

"On his return, after an absence of less than a quarter of an hour, the hotel bus, conveying passengers from the last down train of the day, had just deposited a passenger who also desired to put up for the night, remarking that his luggage had been taken on in the train by mistake; but he was informed every room was full, the boots turning to the prisoner, remarking: 'This gentleman has just taken the last.' Whereupon the now missing man seemed much put out, saying it was most annoying, as he had a special appointment to keep in the neighbourhood the next day.

"The prisoner, you will be told, voluntarily offered to share his room with the stranger, an offer the latter very willingly accepted, and in a short time the two men were engaged in friendly chat in the smoking-room. Later on the conversation drifted into politics, and the arguments became warm on both sides, so much so that the attention of the waiter was attracted thereby. The prisoner, it appears, was advocating physical force for the remedy of constitutional grievances, whereas the

Digitized by Google

stranger expressed himself as strongly opposed to such proceedings.

"Eventually, about eleven o'clock, both men retired to rest, the prisoner instructing the chambermaid to bring him some hot water, as he always shaved over-night. To do so necessitated her going to the lower part of the house, and she will tell you that on her return to the bedroom she heard an angry altercation going on between the two men, which, however, ceased when she knocked at the door, and she was unable to hear the purport of their remarks. But on the door being opened for her to place the water inside, she noticed that the prisoner seemed, as she expresses herself, much put out.

"Gentlemen, what subsequently took place I am unable to tell you, but the next morning the prisoner came down to breakfast at nine a.m., and remarked casually, that his bedfellow was up before him, and he supposed he had gone out to keep an appointment. As events proved, gentlemen, that appointment was never kept. There was, however, nothing to arouse suspicion beyond the fact that the stranger did not put in an appearance, but it seems that the chambermaid, when making up the bed, noticed what appeared to be blood stains on the carpet—(sensation in court)—and lost no time in communicating the fact to the landlord of the hotel, who himself visited the room and found not only that the girl's statement was true, but that on some steps leading from the verandah outside the bedroom down to the garden below (a plan of the house and grounds will be submitted to you) there were unmistakable signs of what appeared to be blood. There was also a small pool of blood just by the footbridge spanning the river, which, as you are doubtless aware, is a swift tidal tributary running into the sea, less than a mile distant.

"This is as far as I can carry the case, no trace of the missing man having since been found, although a few hundred yards below the bridge, at low water the same day, was found a hat, bearing no maker's name or other means of identification, but corresponding in appearance with the one worn by the missing man on his arrival at the hotel the night before.

"These are the facts, gentlemen, as I am instructed, and you will not be surprised to hear that on their coming to light the prisoner before you was arrested, charged before the local magistrates, and by them committed for trial. It is but fair to the prisoner to say that on the morning of the discovery he made no effort to leave the hotel, but busied himself in writing an essay, apparently for publication, on the gross injustice under which certain of Her Majesty's subjects suffer, and I shall not be exceeding, I think, the bounds of fairness and justice when I say that, from papers found in his possession when searched, he would appear to be a member of at least one revolutionary society.

"Beyond his name, the correctness of which is borne out by its being written on several articles of wearing apparel, it has been impossible to discover anything as to his identity, although, from the fact of his being defended by one of the most able advocates of the English Bar" (the defending counsel acknowledged the compliment by bowing), "it is, I think, pretty evident that he is not friendless or penniless. Gentlemen, that is the case before you. I will now proceed to call witnesses in support of what I have stated."

The first witness called was the driver of the bus, who deposed to having driven the prisoner from the station to the hotel, and subsequently, the missing man, who came in by the last train; his evidence was purely formal; and the prisoner's counsel did not make any cross-examination.

The same thing occurred with the boots of the hotel, and the coffee-room waiter; whose evidence was nothing beyond a bare statement of facts.

A chambermaid next entered the witness-box; and after detailing how she had been instructed to carry hot water to the bedroom, described how she heard the voices of the two men engaged in angry altercation, the sound of which ceased when she knocked at the door.

In cross-examination she admitted that she could not be sure it was an *angry* argument, as she could not distinguish anything that was said.

"Might they not have been laughing uproariously at some joke?"

They might, for all she knew; she heard a good deal of noisy talk.

"I thought you said, just now, angry talk? Be careful what you say; mind, you are on your oath."

"I couldn't swear they were what you might call quarreling, but they were talking loud."

"You did not happen to hear anything they said, I think?"

"No, sir, I did not."

"Thank you, that will do," with a significant glance at the jury.

Several other witnesses followed, their evidence merely referring to the prisoner's movements on the night of arrival and the morning of the supposed murder, and then there was a visible excitement in court as the chief witness in the case, the chambermaid who made the discovery of the blood on the carpet, took her place and was sworn.

"Your name is Esther Gough?"

"Yes, sir."

"And on the 21st June last you were engaged in making up the bed and tidying up the apartment known as the balcony room at the Golden Cross, Lymeton?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, look at the jury, please, and tell us what you saw."

"I had nearly done the room, when at the side of the bed next to the window I noticed a dark stain on the carpet, and when I went to wipe it up with my cloth it was wet, and I found it was blood" (sensation), "and I at once went and told the master."

"That is all you know about it?"

"Yes, sir."

Cross-examined: "In the bedroom was a table with writing materials, I think?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ink and papers, etc.?"

"Yes, sir; it is a rule of the house."

"Quite so. Black ink, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"And red?"

"Yes, sir; all the inkstands are the same pattern, with two bottles—one for black ink, the other red."

"And it would be your duty to see they are supplied with ink regularly?"

"Yes, sir."

The defending counsel sat down.

James Goold, landlord of the hotel, deposed to being informed by the last witness of there being a stain of what appeared to be blood on the carpet in the balcony room, and went to see for himself. There was a small stain, and he certainly thought it looked like blood. He opened the window leading to the verandah and steps, and went down into the garden, and in doing so

Digitized by Google

he noticed on the steps and along the gravel path what he took to be more blood marks; and, pursuing his investigation until he came to the bridge over the river, he found a pool of blood just by the edge of the water. He had not at the time been apprised that the second gentleman, who had occupied the balcony room, had not been seen; but, on hearing of this, his suspicions were aroused, and he gave notice of the matter to the police. Having done so he felt his responsibility was at an end.

Cross-examined: "He was out at the time the missing man arrived."

"Beneath the verandah there is, I believe, a fowl run?"

"There is."

"And you keep fowls there?"

"I do."

"And when any are killed it would, I suppose, be convenient to hang them by the legs on the railing of the iron staircase?"

"I have seen my man do it."

"Are all the fowls thus killed consumed in the house?"

"Most of them; not all."

"And what becomes of the others?"

"I sell them."

"And—now pay attention, please—in the event of any fowls being killed for sale, where would they be taken? Up the steps and into the house through the bedroom?"

"No; they would in all probability be handed to a higgler, who calls in his boat once or twice a week."

"And he would come to the landing-place by the bridge, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

A murmur of applause ran through the court as counsel resumed his seat.

The only other important witness called for the prosecution was the man who at low water found a hat in the mud near the bridge.

Several witnesses were then called to prove that it was similar in shape and colour to the one worn by the missing man on his arrival, and this closed the case for the prosecution.

The prisoner elected to be sworn, and his counsel proceeded to examine him, by asking if he had ever seen the missing man before June 20th; to which he replied he had not. On being asked as to what was the nature of the conversation between them in the bedroom, the prisoner entered into a tirade against the inequality existing between the rich and poor in this country, and boldly announced himself as a revolutionary Anarchist; in vain did his counsel try and intervene, to prevent him giving expression to sentiments, which it was plain to see—by watching the faces of the jury—were speedily alienating any sympathy he might have aroused in their minds. It was a useless effort, as having once begun, he continued in a strain of almost ferocious invective, and it was not until he had well-nigh exhausted himself by the vehemence of his utterances that he seemed to realise the injury he had done his case. But he finished his harangue, and then looked defiantly at judge and jury, as if he would say: "Those are my sentiments, my lord and gentlemen, and I glory in them."

After putting one or two more or less irrelevan questions, his counsel resumed his seat.

Knowing the ability of the prosecuting counsel, it was anticipated that the cross-examination would be a severe one, but to the surprise of everyone in court, addressing his lordship, he said, in a tone of voice, the significance of which made itself felt:

"My lord, after what the prisoner has himself said, I do not think there is any necessity for me to cross-examine him, and I will, with your lordship's permission, proceed to address the jury, a task which will not occupy me long.

"My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury, you have heard the evidence brought before you, and despite the prisoner's rash utterances"—the prisoner's face never relaxed a muscle at this pertinent observation; he appeared, in fact, to regard the whole matter more in the light of a disinterested spectator than anything else—"despite, I say, the prisoner's vehement declarations, amongst which was the statement that under certain circumstances the taking of human life might be regarded as justifiable; despite all this, I say, which may, I think, be regarded more as the outcome of the pernicious doctrines of certain fanatical revolutionists of this age than any actual belief he himself holds, I would ask you to view calmly and dispassionately the evidence which has been laid before you.

"That a man—name unknown—did on the night of the 20th June occupy a bedroom conjointly with the prisoner has not been attempted to be disproved. And the fact that since the two men retired to rest one of them has not been seen alive, or heard of, is also undisputed. Beyond this I admit the case entirely rests upon circumstantial evidence, with this important addition that blood was found upon the carpet, on the verandah steps, on the gravel, and, finally, by the side of the river, in which, as you have been told, the tide flows very quickly, quickly enough, gentlemen, to carry away with it the body of a man. And last of all there is the finding of a hat similar in shape and appearance to that worn by the missing man.

"These are the facts, gentlemen, on which you are asked to arrive at a verdict, and I cannot doubt in my own mind what it will be. It is not for me to foreshadow the line of defence, but I may perhaps be allowed to suggest that the absence of any weapon will be dwelt on by my learned friend; this I may discuss at once, as I venture to submit that strangulation would not have been difficult to accomplish for a man of the prisoner's build, bearing in mind that the missing man has been described to you as of slim stature, and below the average height; no match, in fact, in a physical encounter for the man before you; and the fact of only a small quantity of blood having been found would support this view, it being well known that in cases of death by strangulation or hanging, only a small quantity of blood is as a rule discharged through the nose or ears of the victim; not having inflicted any wound, the prisoner may have imagined to himself that no trace would remain of his crime. Whilst on this subject, I may remind you that the prisoner's counsel ingeniously suggested that the blood stains might have been those of a slaughtered fowl!

"Gentlemen, you will have observed this point was merely suggested, not pressed home. Had it been," in an impressive tone of voice, "I was prepared to call two medical men who would have sworn that they had severally, and independently of each other, analysed the red substance which had become congealed on one of the iron steps of the staircase and found it to be human blood!" (Sensation.) "This, I think, gentlemen, satisfactorily disposes of the suggested theory. Had it been more than a suggestion I should have been prepared to refute it, but as it was I did not deem it necessary to unduly occupy the time of the court.

"Gentlemen, as counsel for the prosecution, I have

Digitized by Google

tried to do my duty, it is for you, and you alone, to decide what the verdict shall be, and I leave the issue of the case unreservedly in your hands."

There was a death-like silence in court, and every eye was directed towards the prisoner, who had listened unmoved to the terrible indictment preferred against him with all the force and ability of one of the most skilful lawyers of the day, the prosecutor for the Crown.

To say that the prisoner looked altogether unmoved was perhaps to understate the fact. The look of anxiety which his face had worn at the commencement of the proceedings had been replaced by one of stolid indifference, and his counsel scanned his features carefully before rising to reply.

To everybody's surprise his opening sentence was as follows:

"After what has fallen from the lips of my learned friend—and there was nothing in his speech to which I take exception—it is, I feel, useless for me to attempt to put forward any ordinary line of defence. But, gentlemen of the jury, I would ask you to look for a moment at the prisoner." (The jury, to a man, instinctively looked in the direction of the dock.) "But a short while ago, gentlemen, you heard the prisoner declaim against the existing conditions of society, and even go so far as to say that, under certain circumstances, the taking of human life was a justifiable act. Placed in the awful position the prisoner is, I ask you, gentlemen, is that the outcome of sanity or otherwise? I can anticipate your reply. It is the utterance of a madman, you will say, and I agree with you. When I undertook the prisoner's defence I felt assured that he was not guilty of the crime of murder. Now, I confess, my belief is shaken; but another conviction has been irresistibly borne in upon me—and in it I shall, I think, have your concurrence—it is, that the prisoner is insane; and, such being the case, I ask your lordship that the prisoner's state of mind may be inquired into, and that your lordship defers summing-up until to-morrow, with a view of such investigation being made."

Surprise and amazement was predicted on the face of every person in the court. His lordship, after consideration, said he would accede to the request; meanwhile the prisoner was, he directed, to be closely watched, and he would take the next case on the list.

* * * * *

The extraordinary turn affairs had taken was the one subject of conversation in the town of Eminster during the rest of the day and late into the night; one enterprising individual even cabled a brief account of the trial to a London news agency.

Before the assembling of the court on the day following, a man, evidently only just recovering from a serious illness, called at the judge's lodgings, and asked to see his lordship.

The witnesses, in what had been called the Lymeton mystery were hastily summoned, and one and all, on being confronted with him, immediately acknowledged the identity of the new arrival as the missing individual, for whose murder Martin Smith had been tried the day preceding.

His story was briefly as follows: It was, he said, quite true that he and the prisoner had, before retiring to rest, had a heated argument on the subject of anarchy, in which the prisoner had expressed himself as a strong believer. Early in the morning he—the missing man—had got up tempted by the fineness of the day, and, when dressing, his nose had commenced to bleed; he had endeavoured to staunch it as best he could, and seeing that the window of the room led into the garden, down a flight of steps, he emerged; hoping the fresh air would refresh him.

Arrived at the river he copiously bathed his face, and then went across the bridge. Suddenly it occurred to him that he was absolutely without money, his pocket-book having been left in his hand-bag which (as explained) had gone on in the train without him the night he came to the hotel; his sole luggage consisting of a travelling cap he had placed in his pocket.

When bathing his face he lost his round felt hat and put on his cap. Feeling better for his exercise in the fresh air, he continued his walk across some fields and presently came to a railway-station, thinking that he would find it somewhat embarrassing to go back to a strange hotel and have to explain that he had no money wherewith to pay his bill; he determined to take the next train home, his return ticket being in his pocket, and he was influenced in his decision by seeing an up train come into sight just as he approached the station. Once in the train it happened that his nose started bleeding afresh, and by the time he had reached his destination he had lost so much blood that he was compelled to call in a medical man, who informed him he had broken a blood-vessel, and was in a very critical state, as the result proved.

He was confined to his room for several weeks, and it was only by the merest chance that he saw in a daily paper an account of the Lymeton Mystery, on reading which, and realising the dire necessity of the case, he—ill as he still was—came on by the first train.

* * * * *

Martin Smith was not only liberated the same day, but, marvellous to relate, was also certified to be insane as well.

* * * * *

The warders of the prison in which he had been detained pending his trial, had never noticed anything unusual, and the medical men expressed their opinion that his mind had become unhinged only on the day of the trial itself; when he realised for the first time probably the terrible position in which he stood.

But the strangest part of this strange story remains to be told.

The defending counsel admitted to his learned brother—the prosecutor—when it was all over, that it was a sudden inspiration on his part to assume that his client was insane, and that he had not the slightest idea such was the case when he made the assertion, feeling that it was altogether hopeless to attempt any other line of defence.

S. J. F. Newbery.

Digitized by Google

NUMBER 53.

ONE beautiful evening, in the summer of 18——, I was seated with my friend, Captain P——, at the open window of his room, situated on the second storey of the end house in the Boulevard M———. Outside, in the square, a band was playing some lively music. Nursemaids, with little children, ran races to and fro.

An old veteran in a large straw hat was describing, with frantic gestures, how he had lost his arm. In a corner, beneath some trees, a flock of youngsters were romping with a monkey, and the rays of the setting sun glanced over the housetops, flickered upon the green foliage, and upon the white pavement, over which it cast long, straggling shadows.

For some time we had maintained a profound silence, when the door of our apartment was thrown open and admitted our old neighbour, Monsieur Sang.

He showed us a lottery ticket, which he said he had found secreted in the back of a book which he had bought the day before at one of the bookstalls.

I took the piece of paper and examined it. It was for five hundred thousand francs (£20,000), and would be drawn for in five weeks' time.

Captain P——, leaning out of the window, with his chin resting on his hands, had scarcely noticed the entrance of the old man, but when I called him, and held the scrap of flimsy paper out towards him, he turned terribly pale, and sank back into his seat.

"Number 53!" he murmured aghast.

Not another word could we get out of him. He sat pale and dumb, like one turned into stone.

Monsieur Sang placed the ticket inside his pocket-book, and muttered loud enough for us to hear——

"Five hundred thousand francs! Why, that is a fortune! But an old fool like me will never win."

"You will win!" suddenly cried the Captain in strange low tones, which made us both start.

"How can you tell, monsieur?" whispered the old man eagerly.

"I want you to get rid of that ticket, for as sure as we are living men, you will be the loser in the end."

"Ah! Perhaps you would like to secure the ticket, monsieur?" said the old fellow, with a peculiar smile.

The Captain only shrugged his shoulders, and turned to the window.

"I know," said Monsieur Sang, "that I could get a good sum for this ticket, if it were known I had it for sale. However, as the Captain is so positive it will be drawn, I will retain the ticket, and run the risk of being the loser. Five hundred thousand francs! Why, I see what it is; the Captain is jealous! Ha! ha!"

He went out, and as he descended the stairs I heard him mumbling——

"You will be the loser in the end. What can the Captain mean, I wonder? Five hundred—" But he gained the street, and I could hear no more.

I turned to Captain P——; he was standing silent and motionless at the window. Although his eyes were directed to where the performers stood, I knew from their fixed and steady gaze that he saw none.

For a long time I sat watching him, standing there so pale and silent, all the while racking my brain how to account for his strange conduct on seeing the number of the lottery ticket—number fifty-three. What painful recollections did these two figures recall to his mind? I asked myself this question over and over again, but I still remained in the dark.

All at once he closed the window, and simply said, as if speaking to himself——

"There can be no doubt about it! Number fifty-three is an accursed number!"

"I do not understand you, Captain," I said, for I began to feel curious.

He remained silent for some time as if in deep thought, and I did not interrupt him.

"Listen," he said suddenly, "and you can judge for yourself as to the truth of my statement."

He lit a cigarette, and drew his chair to the table.

"Eleven years ago," he began, "my father, although considered to be a very sensible man, invested a sum of money in a lottery. His ticket was drawn, and he became possessed of five hundred thousand francs. He was fortunate. So everybody said. I, too, thought so at the time. One evening he entered one of the gambling saloons, and becoming fascinated by the play, he lost all his ready money in a few hours. Then all his property went, and when he arose from the table at midnight he was a beggar. Maddened by his losses, and rendered insane by the knowledge of the grief of his family, he shot himself through the heart. His ticket was Number 53!"

"Yet I cannot see how that goes to prove your statement," I said. "The same thing could happen with any number."

"True," he replied. "I attached no importance to the number at the time. Four years went by, and I had almost forgotten Number 53, when a friend of mine in poor circumstances managed to buy a lottery ticket. He won, like my father, five hundred thousand francs. Poor fellow it was the price of his reason. The sudden rise to wealth turned his brain, and he is now an immate of an asylum. Now you will understand me when I tell you his ticket was Number 53!"

I shuddered, but remained silent.

"You can have an idea," he went on, "as to the state of my feelings on seeing Monsieur Sang in possession of a lottery ticket bearing the fatal Number 53!"

I could answer nothing. To me it seemed inexplicable.

The day of drawing slowly came round, and as the Captain had foretold, Monsieur Sang's ticket was drawn. Number 53 was announced the winner!

When the Captain heard it, he shook his head and murmured——

"Wait! Wait!"

Monsieur Sang forsook the Boulevard M——, and bought for himself a nice little villa. He was talked of as being a lucky man, and was envied by all, except Captain P——.

"You will be the loser in the end," the Captain had said. But now I began to think he was mistaken.

One morning, scarcely three months after the drawing, Captain P—— placed a newspaper before me, and without a word, pointed out a certain paragraph.

I read with almost stifled heart, that a thief had entered Monsieur Sang's house the night before, and while searching for the money, which was believed to be secreted in the house, he aroused the owner, whom he stabbed to death.

The Captain was right. Monsieur Sang was the loser!

There is a solution to every mystery. Can you solve the mystery of Number 53? Captain P——, and myself confess ourselves baffled.

N. N.

Digitized by Google

THE OUTLAW'S TREASURE

CHAPTER XXXVI

The Cypher Stolen.

The discovery that Detective Squirrek made on his return from Judge Woodland's caused him no little uneasiness.

He remembered now during the conversation he had twice heard a slight noise at the window, and had turned his head inquiringly in that direction; but as it excited no remark either upon the part of the judge or his daughter, he did not think that it was the work of anything more than the wind or some stray cat.

But the more he reflected upon the circumstance the more satisfied did he become that it was the noise of an eavesdropper, and that whoever this might be, he had overheard everything that passed between the company.

"Furthermore," he reflected, "this man does not belong in this town; he has followed me all the way from Chicago, suspecting that I carried some such secret."

And then he fell to speculating upon the identity of the individual. This was all conjecture, as a matter of course, but so skilfully did he probe the matter, in his own mind, that when he retired to his room at the hotel he had fixed upon the man, and, as it afterwards proved, he was correct.

The cypher had been stolen.

That night Detective Squirrek very carefully placed his revolver under his pillow and left his door unlocked.

"If he wants to pay me a visit, I will not place anything in his way," was his conclusion.

He believed that his pursuer would endeavour to enter the room during the night, and obtain possession of his paper, although there really was no necessity for doing so, if he had caught *all* the translation from the lips of the fair translator. But it was more than probable that he had not caught it all, but enough to give him the clue by which to read it for himself. The detective was drowsy, for he had slept but little during the past week. Still, he believed he could keep wide awake, as he had often done under similar circumstances.

An hour passed away, and all was still. In a country town like Somerville, the hotel closed comparatively early in the evening. He listened intently for stealthy footsteps along the hall—but none came, and he finally passed off into the land of unconsciousness.

"Jingo! but I must have slept soundly," muttered Detective Squirrek, sitting on the edge of his bed and rubbing his eyes, while the rays of the morning sun diffused their golden sunlight over the floor. "I intended to keep awake, but must have forgotten all about it."

He seemed unusually drowsy, and rubbed and rubbed his eyes, and gaped and gaped, and stretched and finally staggered to his feet.

"Hullo! how came my trousers there? I am sure I left them across the chair at the head of my bed, and there they lie in the middle of the floor—"

All at once he stopped, and began snuffing the air of the room.

"My gracious! there is no mistaking *that* smell. If that isn't chloroform, then I ain't—"

He paused again, as he fumbled over his trousers, and whipped out his pocket-book. There lay all the bank notes, snugly folded, and plump and tempting; but wedged in between them where he had carefully placed the paper last evening was—nothing.

The cypher had been stolen.

Detective Squirrek solemnly completed his toilet like a man who was preparing for a funeral.

When it was completed, and he was ready to descend to his breakfast, he placed both hands in his pockets, and looked down at the floor, his favourite attitude when in a brown study.

"No," he muttered, with a sad shake of his head. "I am in the situation of the man whose apples rolled out of his waggon without his knowing it. I can't do justice to it. But it's funny. Here I set a trap to catch him, and he caught me, and that, too, as completely as ever a patent trap nabbed a mouse. That young gentleman has got the start of me, and if I ain't careful he will keep it."

He hastily swallowed his breakfast, during which a horse attached to a light trap was brought to the door, and ten minutes later he was bowling along towards the home of Fred Weldon.

"Just in time!" he exclaimed, reining up, as he encountered the young man coming out of the gate. "Jump in; important business."

As soon as they were fairly beyond the town, Squirrek drew his horse down to a walk, and explained the translation of the cypher, and, in fact, all he knew about it, up to its disappearance during the preceding night.

Digitized by Google

"Do you remember that Doctor Ruthven, who was so assiduous in his attentions to you?" he asked, at the conclusion of his recital.

"I rather think I do," replied Fred, with a laugh.

"Well, he is the man that has followed me."

"No; impossible!"

"I am sure of it, and could give you a dozen reasons that would convince you, if it were necessary. The Cuban, Almanaz, must have given him to understand the nature of the secret he carried, and he has managed to learn, or at least to suspect, that I was following it up, and he had only need to watch me."

Detective Squirrek solemnly completed his toilet.

"And you did not know that you were followed?"

"Never suspected it until I was returning from Judge Woodland's ——"

"But suppose he has the cypher—and it looks very strongly that way—and suppose he can read it, what good will it do him?"

"The same good that it will us. You see that this looks as if the '*Fifty yards north, under the white oak*' is the spot where the Mulligans buried the greater amount of their thievery. In all probability there is enough there to tempt a man to undertake any risk, especially such an unprincipled one as Doctor Ruthven."

"You are afraid he will get the start of us?"

"That's it; and finding that he himself cannot defeat us, he can easily spread the tidings through the town of what we are searching for, and in six hours there would be a thousand people surging up and down Devil's Creek as crazy over this as they were over the oil discoveries in Pennsylvania, and you see what a prospect there would be for us."

"Have you noticed one thing?" asked young Weldon, as they rode quietly along; "there is a very important omission in this cypher of yours, and one which is going to make no little difficulty."

"No, I haven't observed it, and Miss Woodland didn't refer to it," replied the detective in no little surprise.

"There is no starting point given you. It says '*fifty yards north.*' Now, 'fifty yards north' of what? That's the question."

"Why—I declare I never thought of that," replied the detective, with a laugh. "Singular, isn't it?"

"If Doctor Ruthven finds the starting point before us, he will have just that much the advantage."

"You are right," replied Squirrek, giving his horse a sharp cut with the whip, which sent him bounding along the road at a rattling pace.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Searching for the Treasure.

It was a clear morning in the Indian summer, when there was just enough warmth in the sunshine to make it the most delightful season of the year. There was a mellow smoky haze resting upon hill and meadow, and a quiet stillness in the atmosphere, such as is seen only during the lingering days of summer.

Detective Squirrek was a good judge of horseflesh, and he was driving behind an admirable traveller, which passed every vehicle on the road excepting one.

Perhaps a third of a mile ahead of them, as they whirled round a bend in the road, they detected a man seated in a trap, who raised a cloud of dust as he sped swiftly forward over the highway.

"I think we can pass that trap," said the detective, straightening up in his seat, and putting his horse to his best gait.

The fugitive, as he might be termed, sped along at an astonishing rate, and soon proved that he was able to maintain his relative position without the least difficulty.

He was not seen to look behind even once while this desperate attempt was being made to overtake him, but seemed to know, as if by intuition, that he was pursued.

For fully an hour the exciting chase continued, at the end of which time it could not be seen that the distance between the pursuer and pursued had decreased in the least. On the contrary Weldon declared that they had lost ground.

"Let him go!" exclaimed Squirrek, reining up, so as to let him get out of sight.

"That is a philosophical way of taking it when you can't help it," laughed Weldon.

"Do you know who that gentleman is?" asked his companion.

"Certainly not."

"I am certain that it is no one else but Doctor Ruthven. I thought at first that we would try and pass him, and then leave him behind; but, as we can't do that, we will let him leave us."

This was easily effected. The Jehu ahead continued his furious driving, and soon disappeared in a cloud of dust, while our friends continued with a good pace, so as not to lose too much ground.

There were many miles yet to travel, and it was past noon when they reached the road bridge crossing Devil's Creek, and at the nearest inn they put up their horses, and then went on foot.

"If that was Doctor Ruthven," said the detective, "we shall be very likely to encounter him somewhere in the wood."

The stream where they crossed it was quite small. About half a mile further down in the woods, the banks spread out and deepened into a gorge, over which the noted

For fully an hour the exciting chase continued.

High Bridge of the railway was erected, and where Fred Weldon came so near meeting his death.

Turning down into the wood, they moved cautiously forward, carefully looking about them to see whether they were followed, and to make sure as to whether or not there was any one ahead of them.

In this manner they advanced until they reached the bridge, over which at that moment, and high above their heads, a train of carriages was passing.

Digitized by Google

"Now from what point do we start to measure off our fifty yards?" asked Fred Weldon, as they paused for a few moments.

"That is the point, indeed. I have had the idea all along that this bridge is the starting point."

"Have you any reason for thinking so?"

"No—only a sort of instinctive feeling. We shall soon learn, however, whether I am right or not. Now you take the other side, and I will this, and we will see what we can see."

"I suppose I am to make search for a white oak?"

"We will both look for such an obj-ct."

Squirrek remained on the upper part of the bridge, while Weldon passed below. There was a rapid beating of the hearts of both, as the feeling came over them that perhaps they were now upon the eve of an important discovery—one which very probably would have a great influence upon their future lives.

The detective fixed that keen grey eye of his upon a point that he judged to be about fifty yards distant; and then slowly turning on his heel, scanned every tree that came within his range of vision.

This was repeated again and again, but the conclusion was that he had not seen a single tree that would answer the description.

"I have failed completely," said he, passing through to where Weldon was standing in the same position. "What have you discovered? Anything?"

"My idea of what we want is still invisible," was the reply; "but off yonder, a short distance to the left, is what possibly may be the object of our search."

"I very much doubt it; it is too small. Let me take a look also."

He took several, but was compelled to accept the conclusion of his young friend.

The two men made their way to the tree that had attracted the attention of both, but, on nearing it, it was found to be a moderately-sized maple.

They stared at it a moment in silence, and then the detective remarked with his laugh:

Doctor Ruthven emerged to view.

"No use in digging there."

"It will do no harm to try," said Weldon, showing a disposition to use his shovel; but his companion shook his head.

"I examined it very carefully."

"Love's labour lost; we must go back to Somerville, call on Miss Woodland, and get her to help us out of the difficulty—sh!"

The crackling of undergrowth caught their hearing, and, stooping down, they both concealed themselves in the undergrowth, which grew here quite luxuriantly.

A moment later Doctor Ruthven emerged to view, walking slowly down the ravine, with the air and manner of a man who was searching for something.

He frequently paused and looked about him, but, failing to discover that for which he was searching, he finally disappeared from view.

"There goes another poor fellow groping in the dark," laughed the detective. "Now for Judge Woodland's."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A Disappointment and a Fresh Start.

The evening succeeding the fruitless search of Fred Weldon and the detective, both were seated in the parlour of Judge Woodland, himself and daughter being present.

The embarrassment between the young lady and the young lawyer was mutual, and was watched with no little interest by the detective, who was now satisfied that everything was moving along smoothly in *that* direction. He managed to throw them together during the early part of the interview as much as possible, and they finally succeeded in engaging in a sort of fragmentary conversation.

They were left thus alone for some time, but as the detective had called upon business, he was compelled to state it.

Florence Woodland listened until the request was stated, and then she asked for the writing.

"I have lost it," replied the detective, who did not care to explain the manner by which it had left his possession.

"I don't know that it makes any difference, for I am certain there was nothing more upon it. When you first

Digitized by Google

sent it to me, I examined it very carefully, and would have noted anything else."

"Can you give us no additional clue, then?" he said.

She thought for a moment before replying.

"I do not see how it can be done."

"Then we are off the track entirely, which perhaps is for the best, as I am urgently needed in Cincinnati, and am under a partial promise to be there this week. I will go, and leave Weldon here to work out the problem. Perhaps he may succeed in doing so. I observe, judge, you are laughing."

The old gentleman was twirling his spectacles in his

A memorable interview.

hand, and smiling like one who was enjoying something all to himself.

"It serves you right for not coming to *me* for assistance, instead of going to Florence, who is totally lost."

"*You*," repeated the detective in turn. "Indeed we deserve censure for forgetting you."

"That you do, and I am tempted to allow you to remain in ignorance for your criminal forgetfulness."

"We can only bow our heads meekly to the infliction," was the humble reply.

"Then you acknowledge that it is deserved?"

"We do."

After jesting in this manner for some minutes the judge became serious.

"Laying this badinage aside, I really have the power to assist you out of your dilemma."

All listened attentively to his words.

"You fixed upon High Bridge as your standpoint, and there is where you made your fatal error."

"What should we have done?"

"The directions, as you have them, or as you did have them, until you lost them, clearly imply that your point of observation should have been at the *beginning* of Devil's Creek."

"At the beginning," exclaimed Squirrek. "I suppose the stream commences up country in some little spring, or drips from underneath a rock."

"Not so fast. Many years ago, when I was a youngster, and used to go hunting and nutting in the woods, I recollect that the stream along which you made your search was not known as Devil's Creek. About a third of a mile below High Bridge a smaller stream debouches into this one, and from the point of their junction until it empties into the river, ten miles distant, the brook bore the euphonious name which of late years, and especially since the railway was built, has been applied to the other. Take your station at the junction of these two, and my word for it, you will have no difficulty in finding the white oak for which you so longingly sigh."

The next question of the detective was characteristic.

"It seems singular that these men should have been aware of this fact regarding the name of the stream."

"Not at all; they daily came in contact with many of the old inhabitants, and very naturally heard of it."

"Well, you deserve the medal," was the enthusiastic commentary of Squirrek. "You have cut the Gordian knot."

Once or twice during the interview the officer had taken the liberty of going outside to see whether there were any eavesdroppers. On each occasion when he did so he placed his hand upon his revolver, and had he seen Doctor Ruthven there can be little doubt of what would have followed.

But the coast was found clear, and as all were guarded in their tones during conversation, they had the satisfaction of knowing the secret was with them alone.

During this memorable interview there were many stolen glances between Florence Woodland and Fred Weldon. She, who was so brilliant and so completely herself in any assemblage, experienced a strange, nervous uneasiness in the presence of this former playmate of her childhood, which showed itself in a hesitancy and abruptness of speech, and a tendency to look down upon the carpet immediately in front of her.

And Fred Weldon, who had confronted the most towering legal minds of his country, and fearlessly joined issue with them, was a child in this regal presence.

Occasionally their glances met, and at such times a blush suffused the faces of both. When the "good-nights" were said she lingered in the room, as though she were unable to accompany him to the door.

All the indications were that the young but powerful love in the hearts of both was giving unmistakable evidence of its existence and growth.

The following morning the two men were on the road again, and about the middle of the forenoon were standing under the High Bridge, Fred Weldon with a shovel on his shoulder, and Adolph Squirrek, with an instrument generally known as an adze, principally used for cutting away the roots of trees.

They had made cautious inquiries, and carefully looked about for Doctor Ruthven, but had not seen him since the meeting in the wood.

At this stage of the proceedings it was all important that their motions should escape observation, and the detective said:

"You move ahead, and I will follow at a safe distance. If I see anything suspicious I will whistle, and you must wait for me to come up with you."

The "line of march" was taken up in this fashion, and proceeded slowly, as the officer was resolved not to spoil everything by a misstep at the beginning.

On every side he glanced, frequently pausing and walking backwards and listening for the slightest sound; but all went well.

They were now in the very depths of the wood, and it seemed to the men, as they trod stealthily along, that they were stealing their way into an enemy's camp.

The detective was walking along in this cautious manner, when he unexpectedly came upon his companion.

"What is the matter? What are you waiting for?" he asked, in some surprise.

He replied by pointing a rod or two in advance, to where a small stream poured into the one which they were following.

"There is Judge Woodland's standpoint."

"So it is; now we will both take an observation."

Both did so, and at the first glance caught sight of a large, towering white oak, about fifty yards to the north of them.

"The judge was right," exclaimed the detective, his face lighting up with the glow of a man who has conquered victory at last; "we are on the eve of success."

Both looked at each other, as if undecided what to do next. The officer, as usual, took the lead.

Digitized by Google

"Walk down the stream a hundred yards, and I will go up the same distance. We must not be discovered at this work."

This precautionary measure was acted upon, and a most searching reconnaissance made, resulting in the discovery of no living creature in the woods besides themselves.

Both came back and stood by the trunk of the tree, and Weldon looked inquiringly in the face of his friend.

"Begin," said the latter, "and when the roots stop you I will strike a blow."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Discovery of the Treasure.

A strange feeling came over the young man as he pressed the shovel down into the soft alluvium. The thought of what in all probability was a few feet underneath his shovel, and the strange dreams of the future that in those few brief moments flashed through his mind, almost unnerved him for the time.

But he worked all the harder, as if to force back these tumultuous imaginings which were thronging upon him.

Even Detective Squirrek, grim, stern, and emotionless, standing like a statue, except that his sharp glance flitted through the wood, and then down upon the work before him, was more nervous than he had been for a long time.

But he had an iron will, and there was no ebullition upon the surface to show the tumult below.

He stood ready with his adze to take his turn at the work, should any roots be encountered, but Weldon found nothing more than soft earth to resist the action of his implement.

Furthermore, as he toiled, he found that he was passing through a network of roots that had been cut off near the trunk, and by the sides of the aperture he was delving.

The hidden treasure was discovered.

The men were thoroughly exhausted.

"What does that mean?" asked Weldon, pausing in his work, and looking up in his companion's face.

"That we are repeating what has been done before. Those roots have all been carefully cut away for some purpose."

"I wonder what purpose?" he asked significantly, as he leant upon his shovel.

"We shall probably learn in a few minutes. Let me take a turn at the work."

"No; I am not tired."

But Squirrek was anxious to try his hand, for he felt need of doing something to repress his excitement, which was increasing upon him.

So he grasped the shovel, and laboured with an almost desperate fierceness, that soon placed him waist-deep in the pit which he was excavating.

The detective had laboured scarcely ten minutes, when, thinking he was working too far from the tree, he thrust the shovel into the wall of earth in front of him.

As he did so it broke through the thin soft crust, and the blow being quite a powerful one, the shovel went clean through, almost the length of the handle, throwing him upon his hands and knees.

The dirt and *débris* came tumbling down, and displayed a cavernous opening, some five or six feet in height and breadth, the dirt of which must have been skilfully scooped out and carried away, while the ground above was covered with leaves, so as to effectually conceal what had been done from any who might accidentally wander that way.

The Hidden Treasure was discovered!

Over thirty sacks, filled with golden coin, lay piled upon each other like so many salt bags. Each was filled so nearly full that there was only barely room to tie the tops, while the strong canvas seemed ready to burst with its concentrated wealth.

Besides this, there were a dozen boxes of diamonds and the most valuable jewellery. Hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of plunder was spread out before their eyes.

For a few seconds the two men were speechless. Great drops of perspiration stood upon the brows of each, and they were almost overcome.

"Now what's to be done with it?" was the first question of Weldon.

"Get it out of there, and deposit it in the nearest bank, and then advertise for the claimants to this."

But the first part of this was no slight task. The weight was sufficient to make a good load for a horse, and the nearest point to which they could bring their waggon was fully a mile away.

The secret was too valuable and tempting to be trusted

Digitized by Google

to a third party, and the only thing that could be done was to carry the coin and jewellery piecemeal to the waggon.

After a careful deliberation, the course of action was decided upon. It was determined to transport the treasure to a point within a few rods of the road, and there conceal it until the morrow, when it could be placed in the carriage in a few minutes, and carried to the Cornwall bank for safe-keeping.

Fred Weldon loaded himself with all the sacks he felt able to carry, and started up the ravine, while the detective remained behind to watch the treasure during his absence.

In the course of an hour he returned, and described the place where he had concealed it with such minuteness that there was no fear of the other experiencing any difficulty in finding it.

Now Squirrek loaded himself down and started on his tramp. When he came in sight of High Bridge he heard the whistle of an approaching train, and carefully kept out of sight until it had passed. His load cautiously placed in position he rejoined his friend.

This procedure was kept up until more than one-half the treasure had been deposited under some thick shrubbery in full sight of the main road, when the sentry post was changed to this place, and maintained until the last load was removed.

By this time night was closing in, and the men were thoroughly exhausted and used up. They sat down panting, and drew their handkerchiefs across their heated brows.

"Here we must spend the night, I suppose," said Weldon.

Although both were so greatly exhausted, they were too feverish and excited to sleep. The detective lit his cigar and smoked, and recounted many of his surprising experiences to Weldon, who became greatly interested in them, and they found the hours passed much more rapidly than they had anticipated.

When it began to grow light Weldon cautiously left their retreat and made his way to the tavern where the horse and carriage had been left. He was too "flustered" to feel the need of food, but he procured a lunch for himself and Squirrek, and, as soon as his horse was harnessed, was speeding down the road again.

The entire treasure was placed in the carriage without attracting the attention of any passers-by, and at an early hour they started towards Cornwall. It was speedily discovered that their vehicle was loaded to its utmost capacity, and it was dangerous to travel faster than a walk.

At this gait they proceeded, first one walking beside the carriage and then the other, so as not to tax their animal too much, or incur too great a risk of breaking down.

CHAPTER XL.

All Ends in the Usual Way—Happily.

It was about noon when Fred and Squirrek entered the small town of Cornwall. They went straight to the bank, where, as may be supposed, their appearance created no little excitement; but in a few words the detective explained matters to the manager, who happened to be in, and in a very short time the treasure was safely deposited in the vault, and a receipt given to Squirrek, who, after another consultation with the officers, explaining fully his intentions, took his departure with Weldon to the hotel, where they enjoyed their dinner, and, for the first time since they had fairly got into this business, felt at liberty to breathe freely, and take a few minutes' rest.

Detective Squirrek next began an elaborate attempt to trace the recovered property to the rightful owners. There were marks upon the jewel-cases and some of the jewellery itself which enabled him to discover the parties from whom it had been stolen, especially as he advertised the articles very widely.

Multitudes of false claimants appeared, but they found themselves dealing with a man too shrewd to be deceived. Nearly all of those who regained their valuables in this manner pressed some souvenirs upon the officer, who resolutely refused to receive any reward from them in that shape.

All ends in the usual way.

After every effort had been exhausted, there still remained something over eighty thousand dollars in gold for which no owners could be found. It looked as if the Mulligans had brought a large portion of their booty from a distance.

Several carrier companies were able to identify their bags of coin from the peculiar marks upon them, and each of these had the manliness to send a handsome fee to the man who had been instrumental in recovering it, and he was sensible enough to accept it from them.

The end of the whole matter was that when the business was fairly wound up Detective Squirrek found about a hundred thousand dollars in his hands. One half of this was given to Fred Weldon, who positively refused to take it until the sum which the detective had previously given his mother was deducted from his share.

This compromise was finally agreed upon, and so ended the history of the hidden and recovered treasure.

During these proceedings Doctor Ruthven was once or twice seen in Somerville and Cornwall, as if he were meditating some scheme by which to gain a share of the riches of the two men, but evidently he was unable to discover any method, for he finally disappeared altogether.

For a time young Fred Weldon was somewhat dazzled by the large fortune thus placed in his hands.

Taking the advice of Squirrek and Judge Woodland, he invested it in land where there was a certainty of a rapid appreciation in value, and devoted himself with renewed energy to the practice of his profession, living in Somerville, and studying and labouring hard.

Detective Squirrek took his departure for other scenes of his peculiar labour, where by the last accounts he was still engaged at work that evidently suited him.

Encouraged by his own trembling hope, Fred Weldon became bolder in his visits to Judge Woodland's, as he saw that his coming lit up the eye of the fair being who was there, and brought the blush to her cheek as she met him at the door and bade him good-bye.

The course of true love ran smooth in this instance—that is, dating from its outward beginning, but the vast trials encountered by the hero, when his great passion was all unspoken, were such as to verify the observation of the immortal Bard of Avon.

It was a marriage which all, even those who were most keenly disappointed, admitted was eminently fit to be made, and the most misanthropic could not refuse the couple their best wishes for a safe and pleasant journey through life.

The End.

POSTAL RATES.

Short Stories will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
Three Months	1s. 8d.

Printed and Published by C. Arthur Pearson, at "Pearson's Weekly" Buildings, Henrietta Street London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

THE MISERY OF CORPULENCY.

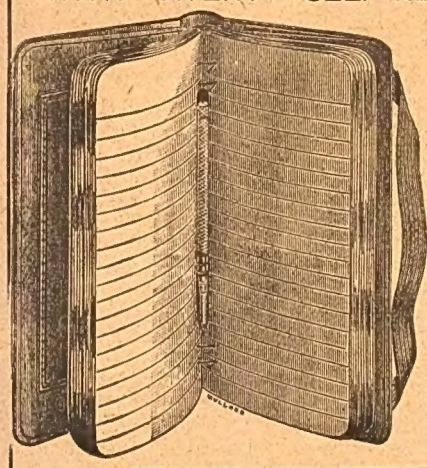
A copy has come to hand of the just issued 18th edition of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency, and the Cure" (246 pages), the clever little volume which, more than anything else, has brought a revolution in the treatment of obesity. That the still larger circulation implied by the issue of the new edition of this popular work is necessary is proved by such a paragraph as the following. It appears among the answers to correspondents in the "Dress and Fashion" column of a Sunday newspaper with a large circulation: "MISERABLE.—A young girl of 18 ought not to have such a large stomach that no dress looks well. Perhaps you require exercise and dieting." The helpless vagueness of this reply to a young girl who is naturally "miserable" on account of her unseemly obesity is a sufficient evidence that Mr. Russell does well in seeking to make known, even more widely than they are at present, the simplicity, the efficiency, the rapidity, and the delightful surroundings of his treatment for the reduction of super-abundant fat. The young girl in question, who might exercise and diet herself for months without any appreciable improvement, may easily learn to imitate the example of thousands of ladies of all ages, who, by the use of Mr. Russell's pure vegetable preparation, have reduced their weight at the rate of pounds per week, and sometimes (but only when necessary, for the working of the cure is virtually automatic, stopping its effects when the normal limit is reached) stones per month. She may acquire this open secret—for the author makes no mystery about the ingredients of his recipe, by sending six penny stamps to Mr. Russell's offices, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., when a copy of the book will be sent post free. If she follows his instructions, "Miserable," without any fasting regimen, and without excessive exercise, will find herself being quickly reduced to shapely proportions, with an improved appetite, and full liberty to gratify it.

LONGEVITY AND CORPULENCY.

We have received a copy of the just issued 18th edition of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency, and the Cure" (Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.). This issue is in itself indicative of the widespread influence which the author now exercises as a successful expert in the treatment of obesity, while the additions to the evidence which, as a statistician, he is in the habit of collecting on the subject are suggestive of some curious reflections. It is evident that Mr. Russell is annually treating thousands of cases of excessive fat with a success which, in the rapidity and the permanence of its manifestation is truly marvellous. That the enormous popularity of his system is likely to increase in the future is most probable, because it is free from all the drawbacks which have rendered the Banting and other methods of reducing corpulence unacceptable to the majority of the sufferers, who have regarded these cures as rather worse than the complaint. By attacking the causes rather than the symptoms of obesity, he strengthens the digestive organs, thus actually increasing, instead of decreasing, the appetite, while the surplus weight is being reduced at a wonderfully rapid rate, amounting to pounds per week, and often stones per month. Add to this that there is no mystery about the nature of the absolutely innoculous preparation, the recipe for which Mr. Russell supplies in his capital little volume (256 pages), which may be obtained post free by sending six penny stamps to the author's offices, at the address given above. It seems certain, therefore, that, as a result of the happy revolution which the patient research of this specialist, with the aid of a distinguished physician as a collaborateur, has effected, the average of longevity will, before long, be appreciably raised. Obesity is, indeed, one of the few antagonistic influences remaining which, especially among the more prosperous classes, prevent the great majority of people of both sexes becoming centenarians. With advanced ideas in regard to wholesome food, clothing, and sanitary arrangements, it only remains to get rid of clogging fat to live an ideally hygienic, and therefore, a very prolonged life.

Digitized by Google

COLLINS'
"AYE, READY!" NOTE-BOOK.
WITH PATENT "SELF-REGISTER."



THE HANDIEST AND THE BEST. THE SIMPLEST AND THE CHEAPEST.

As will be seen from the Illustration, this Note-Book has a hollow "rest" cut into the back, into which the Pencil falls and is securely held, while by means of an ingenious contrivance called a "Self-Register," the person using the Book can at once open it where he was last writing. A reference to any page in the front, the middle, or the end is also materially assisted by the "Self-Register."

In Leather Bindings, Round Corners, Gilt Edges, from 1s. upwards, or with Re-fills from 3s. 6d. to 10s. 6d.

WM. COLLINS, SONS & CO., LIMITED,
Bridewell Place, London, E.C.;
139, Stirling Road, Glasgow.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation,
Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion,
Disordered Liver & Female Ailments.

ANNUAL SALE SIX MILLION BOXES.

In Boxes, 9½d., 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

INDIA RUBBER STAMPS.

For heading Notepaper, endorsing Envelopes, Cheques, and Postal Cards, Marking Linen, etc. Monograms—two letters, 1s. each; three letters, 1s. 6d. each, full name in neat type, 1s. 4d. each. Postage, 3d. Self-inkers, from 2s. each.

Patterns and Price Lists post free.
Stamps are on brass mounts with black handles.

JOHN BERKLEY,
8, Livery Street, Birmingham.

IMPORTANT TO LADIES. Valuable and never failing remedies for all irregularities and obstructions, however obstinate or long standing, and never fail to bring about the desired result. These really wonderful medicines are without parallel in medical science; they preserve health, and have saved thousands trouble, illness, and expense; heaps of unsolicited testimonials. Send at once stamped envelope for most invaluable particulars. (The only effectual remedy on earth.)

A. DASMAIL,
52, LANGDALE, WALTHAMSTOW.
(*Established* 1851.)

TOWLE'S PENNYROYAL & STEEL PILLS FOR FEMALES.

QUICKLY CORRECT ALL IRREGULARITIES, REMOVE ALL OBSTRUCTIONS, and RELIEVE the distressing SYMPTOMS so prevalent with the sex. Boxes 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. (the latter size contains three times the quantity), of all Chemists, or will be sent anywhere on receipt of 15 or 34 stamps, by the maker,
E. T. TOWLE, Chemists, NOTTINGHAM.
Beware of Imitations injurious and worthless.

TOO STOUT.

Prof. Holt's "H.D." Pills for Fat People.

A rapid, permanent, and absolutely safe reduction, averaging 5 lbs. weekly, with improved Health and Figure, and without dietary restriction, guaranteed to all (either sex). Will reduce weight and cure corpulency in the most stubborn cases where other treatments have failed. They are small, entirely vegetable, agreeable, harmless, and highly recommended. Price, post free, plain wrapper, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s. per box.—Prof. F. T. Holt, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

TO LADIES.

English Wives should send at once for Special Treatise and Price List of Surgical Appliances. Advised by the Medical Faculty throughout the world. Apply, inclosing stamped addressed envelope.—M. D., 217, Graham Road, London, N.E. Please name this paper.

MUCH BETTER THAN STEEL AND PENNYROYAL.

Ottey's Unlabelled strong FEMALE PILLS Quickly and Certainly remove all obstructions arising from any cause whatever. Invaluable for married women. Post free, under cover, for 14 and 33 stamps from THOMAS OTTEY, Chemist, Burton-on-Trent. *Please mention this paper.*

CAMBRIC *Bordered.* Children's per doz 1/3, Ladies' 2/3, Gents' 3/3. *Hem-stitched.* Ladies' per doz 2/9, Gents' 3/11.

Direct from the Manufacturers **POCKET HANDKERCHIEFS**

Samples and Price Lists Post Free.

"The Irish Cambrics of Messrs. Robinson & Cleaver have a world-wide fame." *The Queen.*

LINEN Collars, Ladies' 3-fold, 3/6 per doz. Gents' 4-fold, 4/11 per doz. Cuffs for Ladies or Gentlemen from 5/11 per doz.

COLLARS, CUFFS,

Shirts, Best quality Long Cloth, with 4-fold Linen Fronts, 35/6 per ½ doz. (to measure 2/- extra).

"Exquisite quality, most moderate in price."—*Myra's Journal.*

AND SHIRTS.

BY SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS TO THE QUEEN AND EMPRESS FREDERICK OF GERMANY.

ROBINSON & CLEAVER, BELFAST.

Digitized by Google